OpenNotes for Inpatient Psychiatry

The Problem
- **OpenNotes** is widely available throughout the hospital to our BIDMC patients with the exclusion of inpatient psychiatry.
- Access to inpatient psychiatric notes was studied in the 1970s with favorable results (Figure 1) but it is unknown how contemporary psychiatric patients will perceive **OpenNotes**.

**Figure 1.**
Outcomes of first quantitative study of open medical records for psychiatric patients.

**Table 1.**
Patient (n=102) Survey Responses After Access to Their Notes for 5 Months
- In favor of intervention: 92%
- Better understanding of problems: 84%
- More active role in treatment: 80%
- More self-confident: 71%
- Opportunity to correct misinformation: 68%
- Upset by something they read: 54%
- More understanding: 32%

Aim/Goal
The psychiatry department at BIDMC wants to replace patient anxiety about their medical chart with empowerment. The primary goal of this interdisciplinary project is to safely bring the **OpenNotes** initiative to acutely admitted psychiatric inpatients in the hopes of more effective and patient-centered care.

The Team
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The Interventions
- Perform an observational study of 100 patients on the acute psychiatric unit where we ask their opinions and perceptions about the concept of **OpenNotes**.
- All patients discharging will be eligible unless they are unable to provide legal consent or that patient’s treatment team feels the patient would not be appropriate for this study.
- For subjects who consent, the investigators will collect data related to only the subjects’ age, gender, contact telephone number, and ICD-9 diagnosis.
- Consented participants will undergo a standardized telephone interview after discharge. The survey focuses on the patient’s interest and perceived risks/benefits of accessing clinician notes during their admission.
- Data from this study will be used to inform the design of a potential pilot study where patients will actually be shown their notes during their admission.

Progress to Date
Thus far, the **OpenNotes** for Inpatient Psychiatry survey study has gained IRB approval. The inpatient staff on Deaconess 4 at BIDMC has been oriented to the study design and is rolling out this initiative. Patient consent has begun and we are in the process of collecting data about patient perceptions regarding **OpenNotes**.

Lessons Learned
Sharing the medical chart with patients during an acute psychiatric crisis is a provocative and controversial initiative. Patients are unlikely to experience either harm or benefit from participating in this hypothetical survey study. By introducing **OpenNotes** to psychiatric inpatients they will have the opportunity to avail of a service already accessible to medical patients throughout the hospital. This reduces stigma and enhances patient-centered care for a marginalized patient population.

Next Steps
- Continue collecting data from 100 patients and address challenges that may interfere with the successful implementation of this study.
- Consider adding a staff survey to address the inpatient psychiatry staff perspectives on **OpenNotes**.
- Analyze the survey data and publish results in an academic paper and continue to disseminate the news of our innovative research to the academic field and lay public.
- Formulate the next phase of this research by developing an IRB approved pilot study whereby psychiatric inpatients will have access to their notes.

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