Increasing the detection of Childhood Obesity: A Quality Improvement Project in a South Texas Family Practice Clinic

PURPOSE
The purpose of this scholarly quality improvement project was to increase the detection of childhood obesity by 25% using evidence-based practice guidelines to direct the standard of care.

BACKGROUND
Childhood obesity continues to increase in children in the United States, leading to a rise in obesity-related comorbidities. The project was implemented in a South Texas family practice clinic located in the Rio Grande Valley (RGV), ranked first in the nation for the highest percentage of obese and inactive adults and second for the highest percentage of diabetic adults.

METHODOLOGY
Evidence-based guidelines and pediatric obesity education were utilized to increase the detection of childhood obesity. The Plan-Do-Study-Act model for quality improvement was used to implement the project. Patients with a BMI > 85th percentile were given an opportunity to participate in the quality improvement intervention.

RESULTS
A total of 1,192 patients were encountered during the initial implementation of the pediatric intervention project and 1,158 patients were screened for a BMI >85th percentile. The aim was achieved because the detection of childhood obesity increased from a baseline of 45 detections to 103 detections post-intervention. Therefore, the detection of childhood obesity increased by 128%, which is beyond the 25% set aim.

IMPLICATIONS
The doctoral prepared Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN) can optimize the assessment and evaluation of childhood obesity in the clinical setting. Education regarding the management of overweight and obese children should be provided to all staff in the clinical setting. Clear evidence-based guidelines should be available as a reference for the management of childhood obesity. Cultural and home life circumstances of the participant should be considered during the implementation process to assist in patient care.