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Provider perspectives when integrating social determinants of health in response to Schickedanz A, Hamity C, Rogers A, et al. Clinician Experiences and Attitudes Regarding Screening for Social Determinants of Health in a Large Integrated Health System. Med Care 2019.

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Schickedanz¹ and colleagues reported that among 258 clinicians from an integrated health system who participated in a survey, 84% supported the collection of social determinants of health (SDOH) but only a minority expressed confidence in their ability to address social needs. They also reported lack of time to ask and resources were the most commonly cited barriers to screening for social needs particularly among physicians when compared to non-physicians.

As part of a process of stakeholder engagement ^{2, 3}, our team conducted a similar study in 2017 ⁴ which support the findings by Schickedanz et al and offers some additional insights on physicians' perspectives regarding screening for social needs.

We exclusively surveyed physicians across all specialties in a diverse Florida academic center. Of the 240 responders, over 80% of physicians supported the collection of SDOH but only 56% believed the benefits outweighed the risk. This was particularly true among the 53% physicians who self-reported being Non-Hispanic White. In fact, in a model adjusted for age, gender, specialty, role and department, only belonging to a racial minority group correlated to believing the benefits outweighed the risk of collecting SDOH.

These findings along with those from Schickendanz et al suggest that life course experiences and exposures and not only training or time demands influence clinicians' views regarding their role in addressing SDOH. We agree with the authors that health systems must understand and address barriers before deploying screening strategies but we propose that this dialogue should occur amongst very diverse stakeholders and be framed as an open exchange of innovative ideas including the reengineering of health systems.

Only an inclusive and intergenerational approach will allow us to create organizations designed to overcome current limitations, expand their current scope and capabilities ⁵ and include social accountability as part of their mission. ⁶

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