

[P02.141] A Poll of Neurology Clinics in Rural Illinois Regarding the Evaluation of Alzheimer Disease and the Availability of Related Educational Material

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OBJECTIVE: Determine the availability of neurologists in rural Illinois to evaluate patients for Alzheimer disease (AD). Determine if they provide AD educational information. **BACKGROUND:** The availability of specialists to evaluate AD in rural areas is limited. The availability of AD educational material in rural areas could be an important resource.

DESIGN/METHODS: Of the 102 counties in Illinois, 93 can be considered "rural," being outside the Chicago metropolitan region. We identified neurologists licensed and practicing in these 93 counties using a database obtained from the Illinois Department of Professional Regulation. We called each neurologist's clinic to ask: 1) Does the doctor evaluate patients for suspected AD? and 2) Where can one obtain educational material about AD? **RESULTS:** Excluding two affiliated with medical schools, we identified 40 neurology clinics in the 93 counties, representing 71 neurologists. All geographic areas of rural Illinois were represented, including all cities with a population greater than 20,000. The furthest a patient would have to travel within Illinois to visit one of these clinics was approximately 50 miles. Thirty-nine of the 40 clinics stated that they evaluate patients for suspected AD. Almost all the clinics were helpful in either offering to provide educational material or directing the caller to other resources, such as the internet, the library, or the local county health department. Only six specifically mentioned the Alzheimer's Association as a resource. Five were of little help regarding educational information, because they instructed the caller to call his/her primary physician or the local hospital, or they didn't know of a resource. **CONCLUSIONS/RELEVANCE:** All areas in rural Illinois are within 50 miles of an Illinois neurologist who evaluates patients for AD. Although, in general, the rural neurology clinics provide educational information about AD, there is an opportunity for improvement. For example, clinic staff could be more informed about the Alzheimer's Association.

Category - Neurologic Education

SubCategory - Epidemiology