The care cascade for latent tuberculosis infection in children at a federally qualified health center in Northern California

Burrough W1, Hsieh C1,2, Mochizuki T3, Tamerat M1, Noor Z1, Lewis G1, Asfaha S3, Katrak S3, Chitnis A4, Jaganath D1,2,5

1Department of Pediatrics, UCSF Benioff Children’s Hospital, Oakland, USA 2Division of Pediatric Infectious Diseases, University of California, San Francisco, San Francisco, USA 3Institute for Global Health Sciences, University of California, San Francisco, San Francisco, USA 4Tuberculosis Section, Division of Communicable Disease Control and Prevention, Alameda County Public Health Department, San Leandro, USA 5Center for Tuberculosis, University of California, San Francisco, San Francisco, USA

BACKGROUND It is critical to screen, diagnose and treat children with latent tuberculosis infection (LTBI), as they are at risk of severe tuberculosis (TB) disease and are a reservoir for future TB transmission. We analyzed six years of well-child visits to characterize the pediatric LTBI care cascade.

DESIGN/METHODS We extracted electronic medical record (EMR) data for well-child visits in children 1-18 years old between 2014 and 2020 at a pediatric federally qualified health center in Oakland, California. Per American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) guidelines, children should be annually screened for TB risk factors at well-child visits, and this clinic uses an EMR note template to prompt providers to complete this screen. Of those with risk factors, we determined the proportion of children with subsequent LTBI testing, chest radiography and treatment initiation.

RESULTS We assessed 14,794 encounters with 48% of children under 5 years old. Screening was completed in 99% (14,575/14,794) of visits. However, of 715 children with risk factors, only 162 (23%) had documented testing ordered (83% with an interferon-gamma release assay). If a test was ordered, 89% (144/162) of patients completed testing and 3.5% (5/144) were positive. Of the five, 2 were previously treated, and the remaining had negative chest radiographs and were started on 4 months of daily rifampin.

CONCLUSION While EMR note templates promoted high rates of TB risk factor screening in children, there was a gap in ordering a diagnostic test. Further work is needed to explore provider and patient barriers to testing to inform interventions to improve LTBI care for children.