

EVALUATION OF A SPECIALTY PHARMACY ORDER REVIEW PROGRAM

Junlan Zhou¹, Edward A. Witt¹, Ann Scalia², Laly Havern¹



BACKGROUND

Approximately 10% of women (6.1 million) aged 15–44 years in the United States have difficulty getting pregnant or staying pregnant each year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention¹. Infertility treatment can be costly, with one study from 2011 estimating the median cost for women who pursue cycle-based treatment at \$19,690². Given how much time has passed from this study, the adjusted cost in 2022 dollars is likely higher, although some states have since passed laws requiring insurance plans to cover at least part of the cost of infertility treatments³.

Emotional support and compassionate care are an important part of providing specialized pharmacy care to fertility patients. The AllianceRx Walgreens Pharmacy Fertility Order Review (FOR) program was designed to help minimize the anxiety patients may face when preparing to self-administer injectable fertility medications regularly required in a fertility treatment cycle.

This program allows experienced fertility nurses to provide real-time educational training and support as well as review order shipment contents for patients undergoing fertility treatments to allow a more personalized pharmacy experience. An extension of the FOR program for patients who prefer a video appointment - The Video Connected Care Program (VCCP) is also available through HIPAA-compliant web-based video conferencing technology.

OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the value of the FOR program and its VCCP extension, including its impact on infertility patient satisfaction, preventing late or missed doses, and wastage or loss.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study design was descriptive, nonexperimental, and cross-sectional. Records from patients who received services from the FOR program and VCCP in 2021 were used to estimate time spent on the phone with patients, prevented wastage/loss due to incorrect storage, and prevented late/missed doses.

A survey for patients in the FOR program and VCCP was completed by a web-based tool www.surveymonkey.com. The survey was composed of a few questions (1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree) that assessed patient satisfaction with FOR program (5 questions) and VCCP (12 questions). The results of this study are primarily descriptive and, as such, no inferential statistics were used.

RESULTS

Table 1. Phone time spent with each patient in 2021

Time spent (Minutes)	Patients (N)	Percent (%)
1 - 10	8,070	85.2
11 - 20	1,640	17.3
21 - 30	179	1.9
>30	29	0.3

Figure 1. FOR program medication wastage and loss prevented

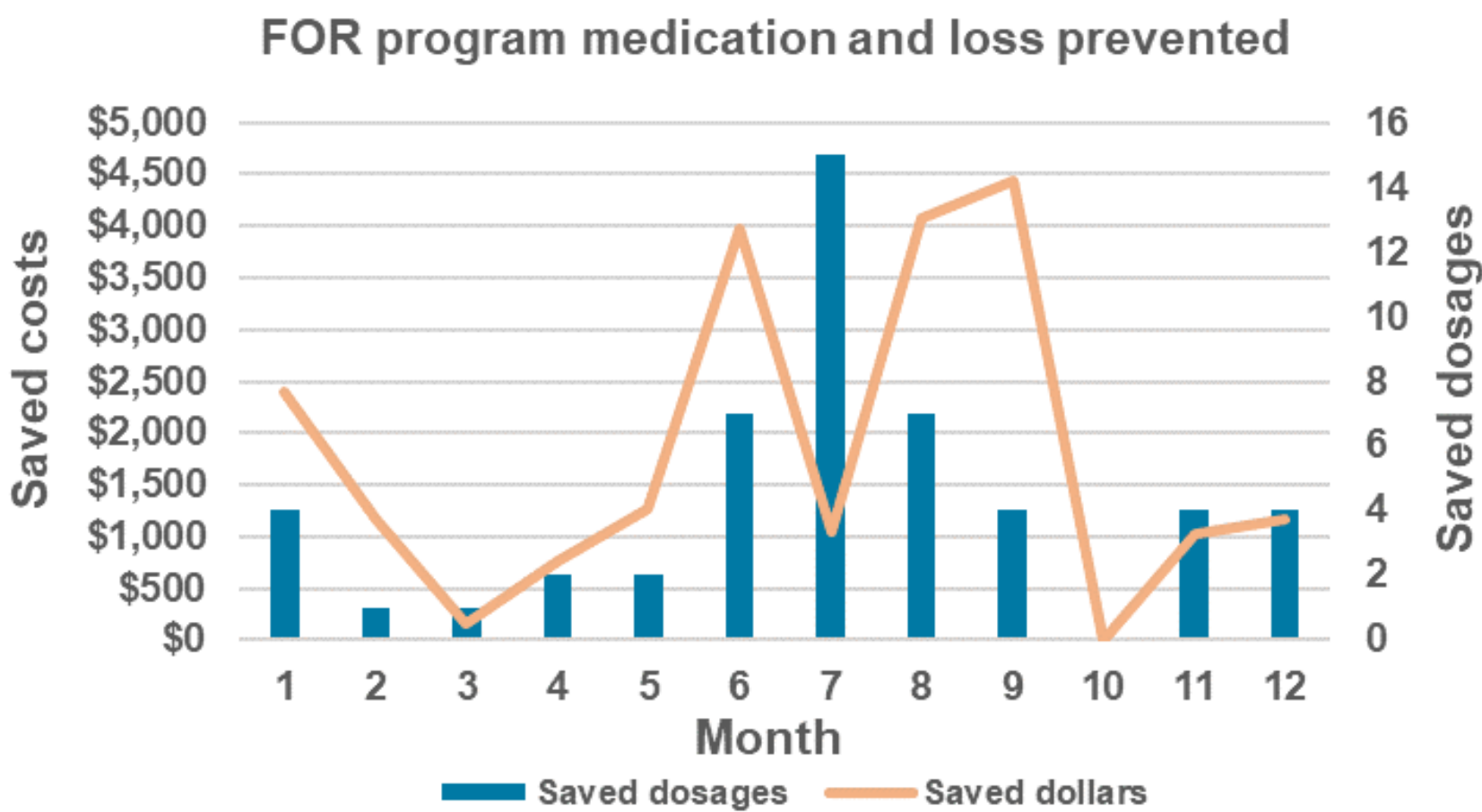
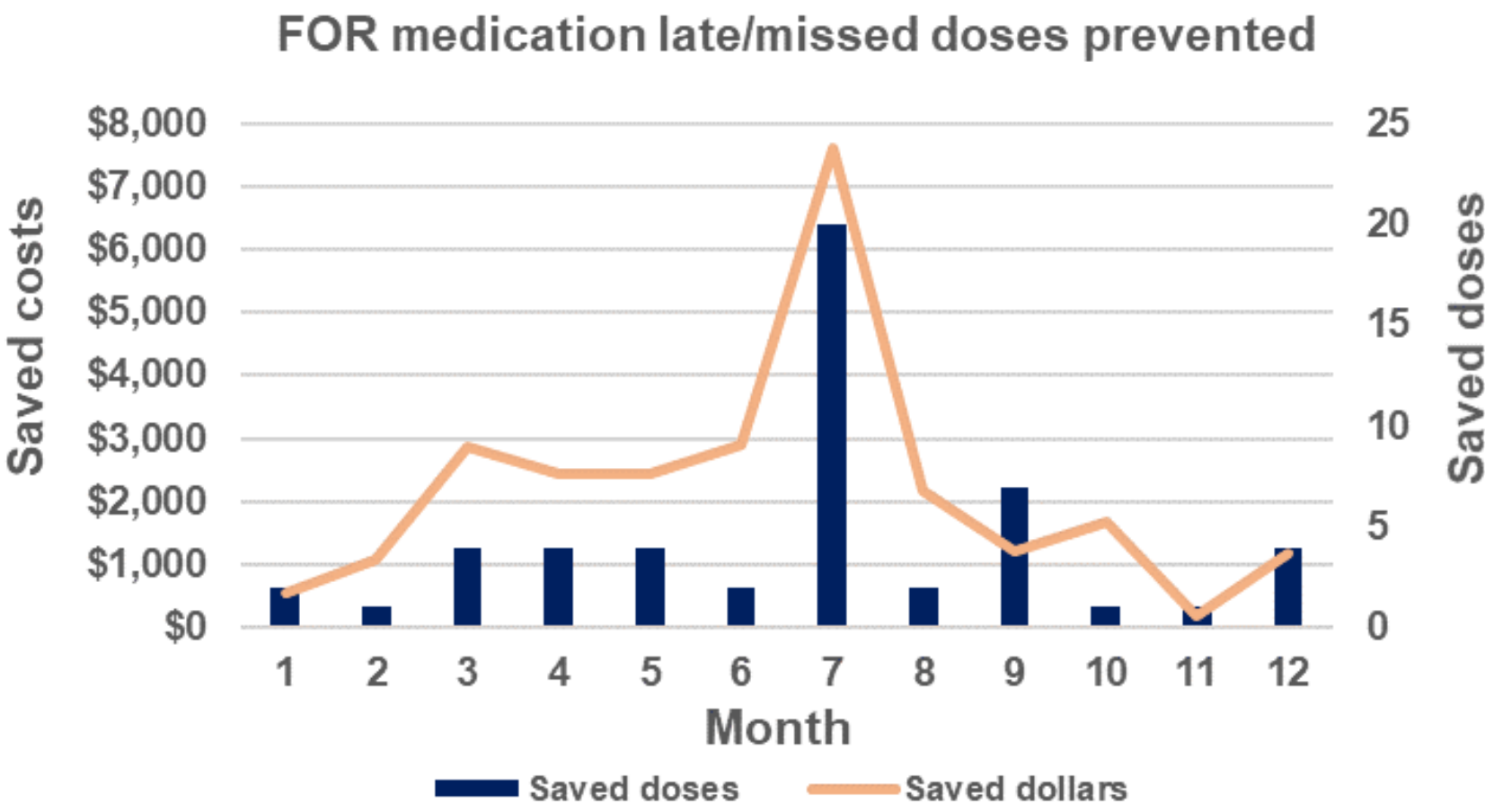


Figure 2. FOR program medication late or missed doses prevented



RESULTS CONTINUED

Table 2. Overall satisfaction with both FOR program and VCCP

	Patients (N)	Satisfaction rate(%)
FOR	329	92
VCCP	52	98

During the study period, there were 9,469 patients who received FOR program services. The total number of phone calls made to patients during the year was 14,127. The fertility nurses spent 1-10 minutes with 8,070 (85.2%) patients, 11-20 minutes with 1,640 (17.3%) patients, 21-30 minutes with 179 (1.9%) patients, and more than 30 minutes with 29 (0.3%) patients (**Table 1**).

There were an estimated 51 saved doses with a savings of \$21,521 due to prevented wastage/loss because of incorrect storage by the patient in 2021 (**Figure 1**). The FOR program also prevented 52 late or missed medication doses totaling \$26,314 in savings that could have led to a cycle cancellation or interruption (**Figure 2**).

92% of 329 patients in FOR program completed the survey and rated their overall experience with specialty pharmacy as “Agree” or “Strongly agree”. The response rate for the survey in VCCP was 60% (52 of 87) in VCCP, 98% of the 52 patients who completed the survey rated their overall experience with the programs “Agree” or “Strongly agree” (**Table 2**).

CONCLUSIONS

The results of this study suggest that the FOR program prevented medication wastage/loss, and late or missed doses of medications for patients who received injectable fertility medications.

The FOR program and VCCP provided a high level of satisfaction to patients. By leveraging the expertise of clinicians at specialty pharmacies and including them as part of the fertility care team, a patient's journey in fertility care can improve. Involving the pharmacy's fertility clinicians can result in lowering the cost of care and positively affecting patient outcomes.

REFERENCES

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