

Project POTS Information Sheet.

Project Summary

We aim to explore how primary care physicians approach the diagnosis and management of Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome (POTS) in primary care. This study seeks to use interview to gather insights from primary care physicians across Canada to identify barriers and facilitators to initiating care for POTS patients. Insights from this process will inform the co-creation of an intervention to improve patient access to appropriate diagnosis and management of POTS.

Background

POTS is a chronic condition caused by autonomic nervous system dysfunction. It leads to a sustained increase in heart rate upon standing, accompanied by symptoms such as light-headedness, headache, and palpitations, which improve upon lying down. The global prevalence of POTS is estimated at 0.12% to 1%, and its burden has increased as a recognized manifestation of Long COVID. Despite existing diagnostic protocols, patients often face significant delays, consulting multiple physicians over years before receiving proper care.

Rationale

In Canada, there are known challenges to care for POTS patients including, limited specialized clinics and long waitlists. Despite the Canadian Cardiovascular Society's 2020 guidelines, primary care physicians often encounter challenges in initiating care for POTS patients. Insights from online forums further highlight confusion among clinicians managing dysautonomias, emphasizing the need to identify barriers and facilitators to improve physician engagement and care delivery.

Methods

This study includes interview and a co-creation session with primary care physicians:

- **Interviews** to delve deeper into themes such as knowledge, capability, timing, and comfort.
- **Co-Creation:** Member-check sessions with family physicians and specialists to validate findings and collaboratively develop actionable strategies.

Through this research, we aim to improve care pathways, and address challenges to initiating care for POTS patients.

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