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Conference abstract

Telehealth service in the UK: does it impact on patient outcomes?

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Abstract

Purpose: Birmingham OwnHealth® is an outreach telephone-based service initiated in 2006 for patients with long-term conditions. The service aims to improve clinical measures and health-related behaviours through effective self-care. The year three evaluation examines if the implementation of self-care has any effect on patient outcomes and hospital admissions.

Methodology: The patients reported data include clinical, behavioural, psychosocial, activity and utilisation metrics. Wilcoxon Signed rank test was used for clinical and behavioural data to detect statistically significant improvements.

Findings: Six thousand nine hundred and fourteen patients were active at follow-up in April 2009. Reductions in HbA1C ($p<0.00$), total cholesterol ($p<0.00$), systolic ($p<0.00$) and diastolic ($p<0.08$) blood pressures were all statistically significant. The data also demonstrate a reduction in unscheduled hospital admissions, GP visits, specialist visits and A&E visits.

Limitations: While the evaluation indicates that a telehealth service can support self-care and improve outcomes in patients with long-term conditions, it is worth mentioning that the data set is largely self-reported which may introduce bias. Moreover, given the complexity of the design it may be difficult to exclusively attribute improvements to the intervention.

Keywords

telehealth, long-term conditions, selfcare, health outcomes
