
POSTER ABSTRACT**Synthesizing evidence regarding hospital to home transitions supported by
volunteers of third sector organizations: A scoping review**

1st North American Conference on Integrated Care, Toronto, 4 - 7 October 2021

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Introduction

Given the risks inherent in care transitions, it is imperative that patients discharged from hospital to home receive integrated care services to ensure a successful transition. Despite efforts by the health care sector to develop solutions to improve transitions, problems persist. To date, research on transitional support has predominantly focused on services delivered by health care professionals, and our understanding of the services provided by volunteers in this context is unclear. This scoping review will map the available literature on the engagement of volunteers within third sector organizations (TSOs) supporting adults in the transition from hospital to home.

Aims Objectives Theory or Methods

The research question for this scoping review was: How, where, and for which populations have third sector organizations engaged volunteers in programs supporting adults in the transition from hospital to home? The Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) scoping review methodology was employed. Due to the focus on TSOs a broad search strategy of 10 electronic databases was employed (Medline, EMBASE, PsycInfo, Joanna Briggs (JBI), Social Work Abstracts, Sociological Abstracts, CINAHL, Cochrane Reviews, Ageline, and Scopus) along with a comprehensive grey literature search. Articles underwent title and abstract screening; and full-text review. Relevant articles are currently being charted, collated, summarized, and analyzed.

Highlights or Results or Key Findings

In the initial search 19,720 records were identified, with 42 included articles. The search was updated in May 2021 identifying an additional 6,161 records, which are currently being screened for inclusion. Preliminary results indicate that TSO transitional support programs are found in Australia, Canada, the United States, Hong Kong and the United Kingdom. These programs can include volunteers with lived experience that take on a peer support role, or trained volunteers to assist individuals with tasks once they have returned home. There is some evidence of programs that include volunteer trained health professionals. Overall, these programs are focused on older adults returning home after an acute care episode. There are few programs where TSO volunteers are a part of an interdisciplinary team supporting transitions home.

Conclusions

Although TSOs engagement is valuable to integrated care by improving the quality of transitions, this topic remains understudied. This scoping review will generate a high-quality synthesis of knowledge regarding the role and contributions of TSOs in supporting transitions from hospital to home.

Implications for applicability/transferability sustainability and limitations

Findings will be used to improve understanding of how TSOs can be integrated into transitional support models, and identify areas where further research is needed on TSO involvement in health systems. Only articles published in English were included, increasing the risk of missing relevant programs reported in other languages.