Effectiveness of a standardized patient education program on therapy-related side effects and unplanned therapy interruptions in patients in home care services: a cluster-randomized controlled trial

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Abstract:

PURPOSE: Medication in home care are difficult to handle and have a considerable potential for side effects. This type of therapy requires a high level of self-management competence by the patient. A standardized patient education program provided by home care nurses may positively influence the handling of medication. The aim of the study was to evaluate the impact of a standardized patient education program provided by specially trained home care nurses on therapy management regarding side effects and unplanned therapy interruptions.

METHODS: sixty-five patients in home care services participated in this cluster-randomized controlled study. Patients of both intervention (n = 31) and standard care groups (n = 34) received the usual counseling; in addition, the patients from the intervention group received an education from specially trained home care nurses. The time of observation was 3 months per patient.

RESULTS: The patients of the intervention group reported fewer side effects (skin rash, pain, fatigue, nausea, vomiting). Patients in the standard care group interrupted the therapy more frequently without informing their nurse, compared to the intervention group.

CONCLUSIONS: Patients benefit from a standardized patient education program provided by specially trained home care nurses. They tend to handle side effects and critical situations better.

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