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Poster Abstract

Effects of an Integrated Care Intervention on Informal Caregivers: Baseline and One Year Post-implementation

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Abstract:

Introduction: In order to face the challenges associated with an aging population, traditional health care models are increasingly being replaced with integrated care models [1]. However, while evidence exists that these models benefit older people, there is a lack of knowledge about how integrated care affects the informal caregiver [2]. In this study, effects of a new integrated model on the caregivers of frail elderly have been investigated. The model is characterized by an umbrella organizational structure involving case management, multidisciplinary teams, protocols, consultations, and patient files. The aim of this study was to investigate the effects of this model on caregivers in terms of perceived health, quality of life, objective and subjective burden.

Theory and Methods: A quasi-experimental design with before/after study and control group was used. Data was gathered using questionnaires (instruments: 2 items of the RAND-36 [3], short form objective burden informal care [4], SRB [5], CarerQoL [6], Cantril's Ladder [7]). Analysis encompassed group comparison using paired and unpaired tests and regression analyses with baseline measurements, control variables (sex, age, relation to care-receiver, living together with care-receiver, income, education, having a life partner, employment, duration of care giving) and the intervention as independent variables. Additionally, analyses of subgroups and interaction effects will be performed.

Preliminary results: Within and between group differences were found and indicated significant reductions in health ($P < 0.1$) and life ratings ($P < 0.1$) and more financial problems ($P < 0.05$) for the control group. Regression analysis revealed that caregivers in the intervention group were more likely to take on HDL type tasks ($P < 0.05$) and experienced less financial problems ($P < 0.05$).

Conclusion: The integrated care intervention increased the likelihood of caregivers performing HDL tasks and reduced their financial problems.

Keywords

integrated care, informal caregivers, effects
