

6. Partnership with Caretakers in Self-management of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease Exacerbations at Home: A Community-based Approach

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Introduction:

Since January 2009, a Respiratory Collaborative Care Team (RCCT) program has been established in collaboration with COST at NDH. A community-based self-management empowerment model was implemented to support COPD clients in the community.

Purposes:

1. To empower clients and caregivers in early recognition and self-management of COPD exacerbations
2. To evaluate COPD clients' and caretakers' understanding of self-management strategies

Methods:

A RCCT pamphlet was used to alert clients/caretakers on symptoms of COPD exacerbation. An action plan on crisis management pack was taught. Knowledge of maintenance drug regimen and correct inhaler technique were reinforced. Clients'/caretakers' understanding of disease self-management during first and last CNS home visits were tested. Evaluations on correct inhaler technique, recall of maintenance inhaler regimen, symptoms recognition and exacerbations management strategies were made.

Results:

Total 208 clients were recruited from 1/2009 to 1/2010 (mean age: 76.4 years). 41 clients participated in the evaluation started in 11/2009. At first visit, most patients correctly cited symptoms of exacerbation(73%), explained inhaler dosage adjustment(73%), who and when to seek help(71% and 80% respectively) and recalled maintenance inhaler regimen(78%). More than half remembered crisis pack dosage regimen(63%), indications for antibiotics (61%) and oral steroids(51%). Almost all these scores improved to 100% by the last visit except for recall of maintenance regimen(95%) and steroid indications(90%). Few fulfilled all requirements of inhaler technique scoring chart (24%) or cited side effects of crisis pack(24%) during first visit. These improved to 85% and 90% respectively by the last visit. Overall score improvement was 36% between first(60%) and last(96%) visits.

Conclusions:

Based on the evaluation results, a comprehensive COPD drug booklet was designed to help patients and caregivers understand various drugs' indications and side effects. It is feasible to empower COPD clients to self-manage COPD exacerbations in the community through partnership with their caretakers.