Evaluating the Efficacy of the Medicaid Innovation Collaboration (MIC) Virtual Health Program Outcomes for High-Acuity Patients

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Introduction

- The impact on healthcare delivery for high-acuity patients needing continuous monitoring and specialized care is significant.
- High-acuity patients with diabetes and hypertension need enhanced education and coordinated care due to the complexities of health.[1]
- In some studies, digital health tools have facilitated enhanced education and care coordination, preventing emergency department (ED) visits and/or hospital readmissions.[2]
- The OSF OnCall Advance Care (OCAC) program is a strategy for the management of chronic conditions, aimed at improving patient care coordination and overall health outcomes.[3]
- **However, there is a need to understand the effectiveness of telehealth services as reported by patients with complex health issues.**

OSF On Call Advance Care: Virtual Health Program

OSF's virtual care team is designed for individuals who are overseeing the health and treatment of chronic health conditions. It provides support by connecting patients access to nurses and practitioners. Through technology, enrolled patients receive digital resources, support and regular assessments to manage the complexities of health.[3]

AIM

To assess whether participation in the OCAC program enhances the management of diabetes mellitus (DM) and hypertension (HTN) by describing time-specific patient-reported outcomes.

References

Study Findings

OCAC Tablet

Results

- A total of 37 individuals completed the first interview, 25 completed the second interview, and 17 completed the third interview.
- Out of 38 participants (23 females and 15 males) aged 43 to 60, 34 had hypertension (HTN), 33 had diabetes mellitus (DM), and 31 had both conditions.

Theme #1: Behavioral Changes

Increase Monitoring	"I now check my blood sugar and vitals every day."
Changes in Diet	"I don't eat as much sweets as I use to."
Increase Physical Activity	"I am able to move around the house more."

Theme #3: Psychological Benefits

Increased Feelings of support	"I always feel like someone is there for me."
Diminished Stress Levels	"I'm not as worried as I once was because of this program."
Increased Sense of Accountability	"I definitely feel like there is more accountability because I am now more aware."

Theme #2: Symptoms Health

"I am completely off all my blood pressure medications!"

"I am no longer on insulin and now just taking metformin."

Theme #4: Knowledge

"I am now more aware of what to do and how to take care of myself whereas before I had no idea!"

Theme #5: Changes in Access to Care

"I was always in the emergency room getting admitted. Since this program, I have not gone once or needed to be readmitted to the hospital."
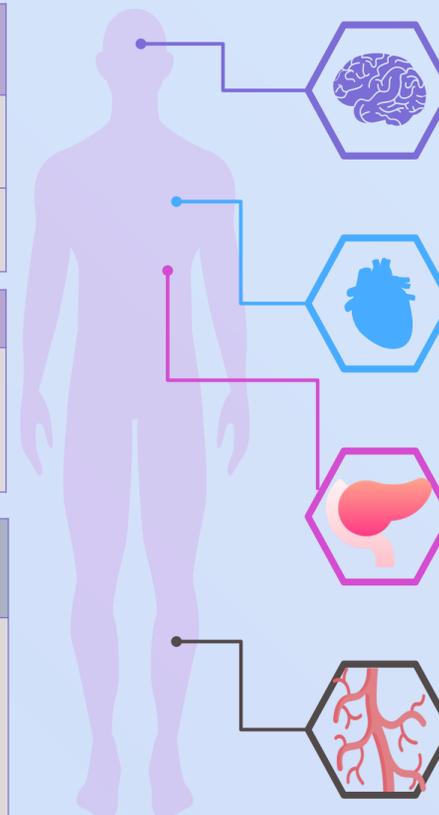
Conclusion

The preliminary findings highlight a range of patient-reported outcomes associated with participation in the OCAC program beyond standard metrics like blood pressure. For example, participants reported improved knowledge, care access, and support. As the interviews progressed, key themes emerged, including enhanced health knowledge and significant improvements in blood pressure and A1C levels. Ongoing research is needed to fully understand the long-term effectiveness of virtual health services, particularly in meeting complex health needs and providing psychological benefits.

Study Design

A qualitative, longitudinal research design was utilized, employing semi-structured interviews to gather in-depth insights from patients regarding their experiences with virtual health programs.

Methods

Participants were recruited through interviews, with each subject being interviewed up to three times. The interviews were transcribed and subsequently analyzed using NVIVO, a qualitative research software that supports a reflective thematic analysis approach.

Nursing Implications

Education: Empower patients through OCAC technology for active health management and promptly report any damaged equipment.

Research: Members of the research team are conducting an analyze of health-related outcome data related of the OCAC program participants. The data along with these findings will inform future research.

Practice: Virtual health technologies can be incorporated into nursing care. Clear communication and empathy can be used to enhance the patient experience in a virtual care model. Ongoing feedback strengthens patient participating and will help to improve the healthcare delivery of patients.

Policy: Nursing policies should focus on establishing guidelines for digital health nursing roles and use of digital technologies to support patients in self-management through programs like the OCAC Program.