

Patients and relatives' experiences of participating in an outpatient comprehensive geriatric assessment during their temporary stay in a community rehabilitation facility – A descriptive qualitative study

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Introduction

Transitions between hospital and home can be exhausting to frail elderly patients who often need extended care and treatment after discharge. A temporary stay in a community rehabilitation facility (CRF) providing 24-hour nursing assistance can be a solution. In 2024 project GeriKom aimed to optimize the cross sector transitions by offering frail elderly patients an outpatient comprehensive geriatric assessment conducted by an outgoing geriatrician from the hospital working together with a nurse from the CRF.

Objective

Exploration of the frail patients and their relatives' experiences with participation in an outpatient comprehensive geriatric assessment conducted by a cross sector interdisciplinary team.

Design and methods

15 semi-structured qualitative interviews were conducted with patients and their relatives (13/15) in 6 CRFs from April to June 2024. Data collection and analysis was processed with the "rigorous and accelerated data reduction" (RADaR) technique.

Results

As a result of the four steps of data reduction, coding and thematic analysis four themes with interrelations appeared.

"The conversation was invaluable.

We (wife and daughter) have talked a lot about whether he (the patient) should continue the feeding tube. Because if he wants to die, he will be kept alive artificially with the tube.

The conversation with the geriatrician has made us get him to put into words that he does not want to live anymore and that he to be involved in making the decision himself "

Interview 4

"She (geriatrician) was extremely well prepared and had read the patient record. Unusual for us (laughs). She knew what it was about and addressed the same issue as we were concerned about. She was spot on"

Interview 2

Becoming personally involved by the geriatrician

Receiving a holistic geriatric assessment

Collaborating with the geriatrician or the general practitioner

Considering the outpatient geriatric assessment to benefit others

"It was really great to talk about the plan with the patient and the geriatrician because many things were settled that would not have been discussed otherwise. She (geriatrician) also believed that we should wait with the lung test. This would without the geriatrician have been a discussion with the general practitioner because he is far away and has not seen the patient since his admission to the hospital"

Interview 3

"It is a great idea! And for the nurses too. They can interact with the geriatrician and might learn more. And reflect on different things"

Interview 2

"We definitely believe that this project could benefit others in the same situation. People like us who also need a comprehensive plan"

Interview 5

Conclusion

Findings from this study could indicate that the physical presence of the geriatrician in the CRF and the active involvement of the patient and relatives when developing plan for current and future care and treatment provides involvement in the decision making, gives comfort and has potential to benefit others. Benefits and experiences from this study can be used in the setup of future cross-sectional initiatives for the frail elderly patients.

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