

McKay, R. Examination of the effectiveness of a community-based comprehensive day program for deniors (CHOICE) -Poster presentation

Authors: Ling Mu, Shirley Samuel, Rhianne Mckay, Bonnie Dobbs, Jasneet Parmar, Michelle Jessop, Oksana Babenko

Presenter: Rhianne McKay, MA – Research Coordinator, Division of Care of the Elderly, UofA

rhianne.mckay@ualberta.ca

Background. 14% of the Canadian population currently is 65 years of age or older, with this percentage projected to increase 2.5 fold over the next three decades. Health care spending for this segment of the population also is increasing. Day centre programs have grown in popularity to meet the increasing medical needs and associated health care costs of seniors living in the community. However, few studies have evaluated the effectiveness of these programs in relation to health outcomes. The objective of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of the Comprehensive Home Option of Integrated Care of the Elderly (CHOICE) program in Edmonton, as well as to examine the medical and functional complexity of CHOICE clients.

Methods. A retrospective chart review of 195 clients admitted to two CHOICE sites in Edmonton between April 2009 and December 2011 was conducted. Data were collected using a structured data collection form.

Results. Overall, the mean age of CHOICE clients was 79.91 (SD=8.09); 56% were female. Clients had an average of 6.78 (SD=2.58) co-morbidities, with 45% of the patients diagnosed with dementia. Cognitive and functional tests administered at admission revealed average scores below cut-offs for impairment on all tests except the Tinetti test for balance and gait. Following admission to CHOICE, the mean number of emergency room visits and hospitalizations decreased significantly in the one year period (1.26 pre-admission to 0.52 one year post-CHOICE admission for emergency room visits and 1.14 pre-admission to 0.35 one year post-CHOICE admission for hospitalizations) (both p's < 0.01). Similarly the percentage of clients experiencing falls was reduced by 80% (from pre-admission to one year post-CHOICE admission).

Conclusion. CHOICE clients at admission are cognitively and functionally frail, with slightly more co-morbidities reported from similar day centre programs. Attendance at the CHOICE program is associated with a significant decrease in incidence of falls, emergency room visits, and hospitalizations compared to rates one year pre-attendance at the CHOICE program. These results provide strong support for the use of day programs such as CHOICE for frail community-dwelling seniors.