A PILOT NURSE-LED TELEPHONE TRIAGE LINE OF PATIENTS WITH RHEUMATOID RARE DISEASES IN A TERTIARY CENTER

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Background: The general rheumatology outpatient clinics are facing an increasing workload. The patients already in evidence with rare or complex inflammatory diseases, such as inflammatory myopathy, systemic lupus erythematosus, mixed connective tissue diseases, systemic sclerosis, Sjogren’s syndrome, relapsing polychondritis, systemic vasculitides and other collagen-vascular diseases are being scheduled for outpatient or hospital assessment at the current visit. However the patients may need earlier appointments, given the possibility of flares or other issues.

Objectives: To assess the role of a nurse-led telephonic triage line in patients with rare rheumatologic diseases.

Methods: The nurses accepting to be enrolled in the programme answered the phone for the patients already in the department’s and their follow-up with rare or complex inflammatory rheumatic diseases. A 2-hours training programme with attending physicians was completed. Respecting confidentiality agreement regulations, the calls were registered with the name, diagnosis and phone number on a standard form. The calls reasons were recorded: appointments scheduling, medical issues or others. The alarming symptoms and signs requiring doctor advice or earlier appointments were checked on a short form: aggravating dyspnea, dysphagia, weakness or Raynaud’s phenomenon, ulcers, etc. Other issues, such as lumbar pain, joint pain, nausea, heartburn, etc requiring counselling, were registered as well.

Results: Over 2 months, 280 calls from patients with rare rheumatologic diseases were received, out of which 171 (61%) were for scheduling or changing appointments. The rest were for medical advice regarding minor ailments, medication side effects, regular blood tests or other investigations performed after the last visit, issues regarding travelling etc. The triage nurses referred the patients to Emergency in 2 cases (0.7%), to the General Practitioner in 28 cases (10%) or planned an early appointment to the attending rheumatologist for medical issues in 20 cases (7.3%), briefed the attending physician in 94 cases (33%) and offered counselling in the other cases (49%), which included: medication side effects, analyses to be repeated, diet and promoting self-care.

Conclusion: Telephonic calls, managed by experienced nurses, documented by standardized forms, are valuable additional tools in the management of rare inflammatory diseases. The pilot phone triage procedure improve patient’s access to healthcare services. Periodic specialty training regarding rheumatologic emergency and communication skills increase the quality of this approach in rare diseases.

REFERENCES:

Disclosure of Interests: None declared

FACTORS WHICH IMPACT COMPLETION AND NON-COMPLETION OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY INTERVENTIONS FOR PEOPLE WITH RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

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Background: Rheumatoid arthritis (RA) is a systemic inflammatory condition which results in pain, fatigue, joint stiffness and an increased risk of cardiovascular issues. Physical activity (PA) has been proven to help reduce the severity of these symptoms and the risk of cardiovascular disease [1]. However, recent literature has shown that people with rheumatoid arthritis do not meet PA guidelines [2]. The systematic review aims to determine the factors which affect the completion rates of adults with RA in PA interventions.

Objectives: 1) Review the effect of the frequency, intensity, time and type of exercise (FITT principle) on participation rates. 2) Review the reasons for dropping out of an intervention and consider how this can be avoided in planning future interventions. 3) Examine the effect of behaviour change techniques used on completion rates. 4) Explore the effect of adverse outcomes on completion rates.

Methods: A systematic review of the literature was carried out in February 2018. Inclusion criteria were: detailed intervention information, completion rates reported, published between 1998-2018 and published in English. Included papers were assessed using the Cochrane risk of bias tool by two assessors. The relevant data was then extracted, compared and conclusions were drawn.

Results: Nine studies with varying levels of quality were included in this review. Reasons for not completing an intervention could be divided into modifiable and non-modifiable factors; modifiable factors include the FITT principle, the behaviour change component and controlling for adverse outcomes. Non-modifiable factors included the environment, illness flare-up and accidents. The results found that when people with RA had an individualised PA program that started at a low-moderate intensity they had higher participation rates than those who followed a generalised program, with no behaviour change component. Altering the intervention in response to patient’s pain levels improved completion rates of the intervention.

Disclosure of Interests: None declared

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