

Quick Review of Model System Research

Randomized Trial of a Peer-Led, Telephone-Based Empowerment Intervention for Persons With Chronic Spinal Cord Injury Improves Health Self-Management^{1*}

What is the study about?

This study asked if “My Care My Call” (MCMC), a telephone program using a peer health coach, could improve self-management in adults with spinal cord injury (SCI). Self-management is a person’s ability and willingness to handle the daily management of his/her health. After 6 months, the study authors found that MCMC helped adults with SCI with self-management compared to those not using MCMC, and that it helped in other ways too.

Who participated in the study?

The study enrolled 84 adults over the age of 18. All subjects had SCI for at least a year. All study subjects had to have telephone access. The study authors found participants through ads placed in community organizations and rehabilitation clinics, referrals from community members, and through an SCI database.

How was the study conducted?

This study was a randomized control trial. One-half of the group randomly received support through the MCMC program for 6 months, and the other half did not use MCMC. All participants answered questions to measure self-management when the study started, after 4 months, and after 6 months. Those using MCMC had calls from a trained peer health coach first weekly, then twice a month, and then monthly. The authors compared results of the two groups after 4 months and 6 months.

What did the study find?

The study found that MCMC improved self-management for those with SCI, which is linked in other studies to lower health care costs and less rehospitalization. Those using MCMC had higher self-management scores and used more services than the group not using MCMC. The MCMC group also reported more knowledge about medical services, greater life-satisfaction, and fewer limitations to participating in social activities. The study authors note a need to repeat the study in the real world to make sure people can be easily trained as peer health coaches for MCMC. They recommend a study that lasts longer than 6 months, has more subjects at different sites around the country, and represents a more racially diverse group. They would also suggest studying whether the MCMC program saves money, and if it can prevent secondary conditions (like pressure ulcers and depression).

The contents of this quick review were developed under a grant from the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR grant number 90DP0082. However, these contents do not necessarily represent the policy of Department of Health and Human Services, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.

¹ Houlihan, B.V., Brody, M., Everhart-Skeels, S., Pernigotti, D., Burnett, S., Zazula, J., ... Jette, A. (2017). Randomized trial of a peer-led, telephone-based empowerment intervention for persons with chronic spinal cord injury improves health self-management. *Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation*. 98: 1067-1076.

*The contents of this summary have been reviewed by the corresponding author of the original study.