Implementing Diabetes Self-Management Programs for Patients with Low Literacy: Midterm Process Evaluation Results from the Alliance to Reduce Disparities in Diabetes

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Background

The Alliance to Reduce Disparities in Diabetes, sponsored by The Merck Foundation, is a consortium of five grantees, the National Diabetes Education Program, and an external independent evaluator, RTI International. The Alliance engages innovative clinicians and patient advocates to develop and disseminate evidence-based tools and training to empower and educate patients and providers. This initiative focuses on creating a supportive environment for patients and their health care providers that fosters meaningful and productive interactions. The three core components of the program include clinician and patient education and quality of care improvements aimed at underserved communities, enhanced community partnerships, and policy changes. All of these elements focus on improving care and self-management by patients with diabetes.

Methods

Participating Sites: To date, ten waves (2009 and 2012) of interviews have been conducted and analyzed with 35 participants who were either CEOs, medical directors, project managers, site coordinators, or health professionals who have implemented the programs through their projects, specifically focused on the patient self-management program components that are serving low-literacy patients.

Process Evaluation Results

Several core themes emerged that illustrate how programs have been serving low-literacy patients through patient education and empowerment through the use of low-cost, pre-existing educational materials that have been adapted for local clients, involving patients to know what to expect and say during medical encounters, and providing easy-to-use information that patients can carry with them as reminders, such as pocket cards.

- Sites are enhancing patient education and empowerment through the use of low-cost, pre-existing educational materials that have been adapted for local clients, involving patients in education and care management.
- Sites are providing resources and support that extend beyond the clinic and that support self-management by involving family members to attend clinical and community settings, including support groups and diabetes education programs.

Implications for Policy, Delivery, or Practice

Based on mid-term process evaluation findings, reaching low-literacy patients with diabetes to support self-management efforts is critical and includes:

- Empowering and educating patients and providers.
- Developing and implementing community supports and policies.
- Changes in clinical workflow and health care delivery.

References


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More Information

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