The Impact of Community Health Worker Home Visits on Geriatric Patients’ Nonmedical Needs in Primary Care

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### Background

- With an increasingly aging population, primary care providers will be challenged with managing the care of older adults, whose health problems are often attributed to social needs.
- A community health workers (CHW), as defined by the American Public Health Association, is a “frontline public health worker who is a trusted member of and has an unusually close understanding of the community served,” and therefore can efficiently link services and resources for community members (APHA, 2019).
- Previous research has focused on the roles of CHWs, but specifically, no study has focused on the impact of CHW home visits in the geriatric population.
- **Primary Objective**: To evaluate the impact of CHWs’ home visits on geriatric patients’ non-medical needs in primary care.

### Methods

#### Literature Review

- Medical Chart Review
- Telephone Interviews
- Analysis

**Eligibility Criteria**

- Geriatric patients (aged 60 or older) who sought primary care at one of the participating primary care offices and have at least one CHW home visit.
- Preferred language is English
- Not cognitively impaired (e.g., Alzheimer’s, dementia, etc.)

### Results

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Quotes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Linkages to Resources / Care Coordination</td>
<td>“She supported me in ordering my supplies for me, and when she comes, she would see how much I need the doctor, and she would go back and tell him.”</td>
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<td>Availability &amp; Accessibility of CHW’s</td>
<td>“She always felt like she was rushed...I get the impression that they have got to get so many patients in their time in the office. I had to go in and get out, and that was it. Where this other lady that I talked to, she would not do that...she would listen, and she was not the same. She came in, she spent time with me, and I was very happy with that.”</td>
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<td>Unnoticed Needs Recognized in the Homes</td>
<td>“I don’t think anybody else realized I needed the thing that allows me to park in handicap. Everybody thought I was doing fine when I left the hospital, but I was having problems breathing and everything. So when they scheduled the home visit, she realized that I was not up to 100%; yet.”</td>
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<td>“Well, I’m surely glad for her because she came to my house. Because getting out and getting somewhere is the problem for me. So, I was grateful that someone came here. That I didn’t have to go through all this mess of trying to find a ride.”</td>
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<td>CHW’s Compassion in Delivering Services</td>
<td>“Her as a person is very caring. And that meant an awful lot. When you get up around my age, everybody you can talk to or is caring, you remember that.”</td>
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<td>“Some people don’t have any interest in you, you know. They only do it because it’s something they have to do, so they don’t do it with that loving feeling. But some people are ready and willing to deal with you and take care of you and tell you anything they know for your physical well-being or your day-to-day life.”</td>
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**Eligibility Criteria**

118 Eligible Patients
14 Patients Interviewed
11 Patient Interviews Analyzed

### Discussion

- This study found that access to care, communication with the clinical team, and healthy behaviors were primary concerns for patients and CHWs helped bridge the gap by connecting patients with services and supervising patients for physicians.
- CHW home visits allowed for the patient's environment to be taken into consideration, and additional patient nonmedical needs outside of the office were identified.
- Perceived quality of care in a primary care setting, as stated in participant interviews as most patients were satisfied with the services and recognized the compassion and time devoted towards patient-care from CHWs.
- The unique relationship that CHWs provide to patients emphasizes their ability to identify social needs.

### Recommendations

- Involve patient caregivers to be included in research with CHWs in meeting the nonmedical needs of geriatric patients in a primary care setting.
- Explore the integration of CHWs during vulnerable points of time for geriatric patients, such as post-hospital discharges.

### REFERENCES


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