A SOCIAL SUPPORT INTERVENTION TO IMPROVE QUALITY OF LIFE IN CARDIAC REHABILITATION PATIENTS

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Abstract

Purpose The study examined whether cardiac rehabilitation (CR) participants at a community hospital in the Southwest, who attended a cardiac support group in addition to the CR program, differed in their scores on a quality of life survey from participants who only completed the CR program.

Methods Responses from 20 program participants (9 who received the CR program and 11 who had the standard of care) to the Dartmouth Quality of Life index survey were analyzed using SPSS22®.

Outcomes The analysis output based on a Mann-Whitney U-test indicated that the intervention group did significantly differ in their scores on the Dartmouth Quality of Life Index, and therefore reported more favorable levels of functioning (life quality) at program completion.

Conclusions Despite a relatively small sample size, participants who attended a support group had improved quality of life scores over those who participated in the CR program only. A structured research question was formulated using the PICO format. The intervention was completed with cardiac support group, sponsored by the health care organization and affiliated with the Mended Hearts Group. CR participants who attended a support group for cardiac disease patients were compared with participants who completed only the CR program by analyzing the responses to questionnaires already utilized in the program (The Dartmouth Quality of Life index survey).

Methods

Ethical Approval IRB approval was obtained from ASU. An additional IRB was obtained from the healthcare system where the project was conducted.

Participants A convenience sample of 20 participants (of age ≥ 67 years, SD = 12.00) was selected from the program. Eleven of these participants completed the CR program only. The remaining nine participants attended both the CR and the support group. See fig. 1.

Intervention The intervention was completed with cardiac support group, sponsored by the health care organization and affiliated with the Mended Hearts Group. CR participants who attended a support group for cardiac disease patients were compared with participants who completed only the CR program by analyzing the responses to questionnaires already utilized in the program (The Dartmouth Quality of Life index survey).

Data Analysis After implementing the The Dartmouth Quality of life index survey, the data was entered into Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS22®). Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data. The critical value was set at p<0.10 and a two-tailed test was used to analyze the data.

Results

Defining Quality of Life

Quality of Life is a measure of the psychological, physical, and social well-being of an individual with a chronic illness.

Quality of life index

The Dartmouth Quality of Life index survey assessed physical, psychological, social, and functional health measures on functional health status including feelings, physical fitness, social support, daily activities, social activities, pain, overall health, quality of life and change in health.

Impact of Project

Evidence exists that social support provided by participation in a support group may improve quality of life. This evidence-based, clinically applied project in a CR setting, found that participants who attended a support group in addition to the CR program had improved quality of life scores compared to those participants who attended the CR program alone. Despite a small sample size, it can be anticipated that these results would be similar with a larger group of participants. Although administering the Dartmouth Quality of Life index survey and the cardiac support group were correlative parts of the program, no comparison between those who attended the support group and those who did not had been done. The project provided evidence of improved patient outcomes demonstrating that the program should continue to offer the support group.

The results of the present project provide greater insight into psychosocial dysfunction among CR program participants and the relationship between improved quality of life and higher social support.

Statistical Analysis

Analysis Output based on the Mann-Whitney U-test demonstrated that CR participants who attended the support group (Mdn = 8.80) and CR participants who did not (Mdn = 12.55) did significantly differ in their scores on the Dartmouth Quality of Life Index, U = 27.00, p<0.10, Z = -1.713.

Conclusion

Thus, the results of the present project provide greater insight into psychosocial dysfunction among CR program participants and the relationship between improved quality of life and higher social support.

Acknowledgements

Evelyn L. Cassarino, PhD, PMP, SC, FAANP: Academic Mentor
Kelly Grogan RN, MA, FNP: Site Mentor & clinical preceptor
Donna Paycheck, cardiac rehabilitation manager & cardiac rehabilitation staff

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