

# Evaluating a Program to Improve Patient Experiences after Discharge from the Hospital – The PArTNER Study

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## What was the research about?

When patients go home from the hospital, having information about what to expect is important for their recovery. Patients may need to know how to plan follow-up care or get help from community organizations.

In this study, the research team compared two ways to help people recover at home after a hospital stay:

- **Navigator and peer coach program.** In this program, two types of trained professionals helped patients. Patient navigators met with patients once, in person, at the hospital and once at home to talk about patients' recovery needs. For example, if patients needed help with housing or food, navigators told patients about community resources. Then, peer coaches checked in with patients by phone for six weeks. Peer coaches encouraged patients and helped them with any new questions about their illnesses or their recovery.
- **Usual care.** Patients learned about their illnesses and went over their medicines with a nurse at the hospital. They also received printed instructions before they left the hospital.

## What were the results?

After two months, patients in the two groups reported similar levels of

- Feeling anxious or supported

- Mental or physical health
- Use of healthcare services

The two groups also didn't differ in how many patients went back to the hospital or died.

After one month, compared to the start of the study, patients in both groups felt less anxious and more supported. After two months, patients in both groups had better mental and physical health.

## Who was in the study?

The study included 1,029 patients who were going home from a hospital in Illinois. Of these, 82 percent were black. The average age was 50, and 55 percent were women. Patients were at the hospital for one of five health problems: sickle cell disease, heart failure, pneumonia, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, or a heart attack.

## What did the research team do?

The research team assigned patients to one of two groups by chance. One group took part in the program, and the other group received usual care.

Patients in both groups took surveys while they were in the hospital and again one and two months after they got home. The research team looked at patients' health records to see who returned to the hospital within two months after going home.

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Patients, caregivers, advocacy groups, and doctors helped design the study.

### **What were the limits of the study?**

Peer coaches couldn't reach 40 percent of patients in the program because patients didn't answer the phone or respond to messages. Results may differ if more patients connect with peer coaches. The study only included patients receiving care from one hospital in Illinois. Results may differ for people in other places.

Future research could look at other ways to support patients after they leave the hospital.

### **How can people use the results?**

Hospitals can use these results when considering ways to support patients recovering at home.

*To learn more about this project, visit [www.pcori.org/Krishnan180](http://www.pcori.org/Krishnan180).*