PROJECT INFORMATION

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Does a Coordinated-Care Management Approach Improve Care and Health for Patients with a Sleep Disorder? – SMART DOCS

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Organization

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What was the research about?

Sleep disorders, such as insomnia or breathing problems while sleeping, affect 50 to 70 million people in the United States. These sleep problems can affect patients' overall health and day-to-day lives. Doctors who specialize in sleep problems usually treat patients at a sleep clinic.

In this study, the research team worked with patients and doctors to develop a new approach for care. The new approach included

- New ways to diagnose and manage sleep disorders using sleep monitors at home and at the sleep clinic
- A secure website for patients to see their own information, test results, and treatment plans
- Classes for patients to learn about sleep disorders

Under the new approach, patients could also get care for sleep disorders at their primary care doctor's office. The team wanted to learn if the new approach improved patients' care and health more than usual care.

What were the results?

Compared with usual care, the new approach didn't improve how patients rated their

- Care
- Overall health
- Doctor's communication
- Doctor's use of technology, such as sleep monitors and websites, to help patients understand the sleep disorder

Compared with the website for usual care, patients rated the website for the new approach as more helpful in presenting information about care and tests.

The cost of treatment paid by patients was similar in the two approaches.

Who was in the study?

The study included 1,836 adults with a sleep disorder. Patients were receiving care from a sleep clinic in Santa Clara County, California. Among patients getting the new approach, 75 percent were white, 11 percent were Asian, and 3 percent were African American. The average age was 49, and 56 percent were men. Among patients receiving usual care, 67 percent were white, 16 percent were Asian, and 4 percent were African American. The average age was 51, and 57 percent were men.

What did the research team do?

The research team assigned patients to one of two groups by chance. The first group received the new approach for managing sleep disorders. The second group received usual care. This care included office visits, tests, and a limited amount of information about the sleep disorder and treatment through a website. Patients in both groups completed surveys at the start of the study and again one year later.

Patients, doctors, professional organizations, and members of medical device companies helped to develop the new approach and design the study.

What were the limits of the study?

Some doctors started using aspects of the new approach with patients in the usual care group, which

could have affected the study results. Many of the patients who initially joined the study didn't complete it. Results may have been different if these patients had completed the study. This study included patients with sleep disorders from a single sleep clinic in California. Results may be different for patients with other health problems or living in other places.

Future studies could take steps to make sure patients get either the new approach or usual care only.

How can people use the results?

Researchers can use these results to identify other ways to improve care for patients with sleep disorders.

To learn more about this project, visit www.pcori.org/Kushida151.