

The Experience of Patients, Spouses and Nurses using the Aussie Heart Guide for Home Based Cardiac Rehabilitation

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Statement of Originality

The thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. I give consent to the final version of my thesis being made available worldwide when deposited in the University's Digital Repository, subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968.

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Glossary of Terms

The AHG

The Aussie Heart Guide, the model used in the study to deliver home based cardiac rehabilitation to patients.

Home based Cardiac rehabilitation

Cardiac rehabilitation (exercise and education) delivered in the patient's home either via the telephone or face to face. For the purpose of my study when this term is used it is predominately in relation to telephone support as described below.

Telephone based/ telephone support

Nursing support given to patients via telephone with no face to face contact. Patients and spouses within my study mainly had telephone support.

Telehealth

Telehealth refers to "the use of telecommunication technology to remove time and distance barriers in the delivery of health care services" (Artinian, 2007, p. 25). In the context of my study it refers to the use of the telephone to provide nursing support to patients.

Abstract

The Aussie Heart Guide is a home based cardiac rehabilitation program. It is delivered over the telephone, to patients with coronary artery disease by an Aussie Heart Guide nurse mentor who works in partnership with the patient for lifestyle change and the management of their condition. Home based cardiac rehabilitation using programs like the Aussie Heart Guide is effective in reducing the morbidity and mortality from coronary artery disease. However little is known about the acceptability of this type of program to the Australian patient, their principle lay care giver, nurse mentors who work alongside patients in its delivery or about what impact it has on nursing roles and functions. The purpose of this study was to explore all these factors in the context of using the Aussie Heart Guide with patients experiencing coronary artery disease and their lay carers (all spouses in this instance).

The methodology used in the study was qualitative description. Four patients with requiring cardiac rehabilitation, three spouses and five nurse mentors participated in the study. Their experiences of using the Aussie Heart Guide were captured via semi structure interviews (nurses) and questionnaire (patients and spouses).

Findings from the study include that patients perceived the Aussie Heart Guide was useful for their recovery and liked the ability it provided to them to monitor their own progress. They also valued their relationship with their nurse mentor. Patient engagement with the program was influenced by their previous illness experience, transition from hospital to home and previous experience of cardiac rehabilitation. The implications of the patient findings were that an individualised program with flexibility of modality would enhance the patient experience. Therefore nurses need

additional skills and knowledge in how to deliver telephone based services to patients which enhance the patient nurse relationship. Spouses though few in number also found the Aussie Heart Guide useful to them in supporting the patient.

Nurses found the Aussie Heart Guide useful in supporting patients experiencing lifestyle change and support with disease management. However, they were uncertain about their relationships with patients when contact was predominately telephone only. The uncertainty resulted in concerns regarding their rapport and honesty in communications with patients. Nurses and patients struggled with issues such as power and control within their relationship and some nurses found working in partnership with patients challenging. Therefore nurses need additional skills and knowledge in how to deliver telephone based services to patients which enhance the patient nurse relationship.

Nevertheless, the Aussie Heart Guide appears to be an acceptable model of home based cardiac rehabilitation patients with coronary artery disease, their spouses and nurses.