

OP 14

Post discharge plan and follow up care intervention in improving quality of life among elderly patients discharged from a Sri Lankan hospital setting: A randomised controlled trial

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Background: The elderly population of Sri Lanka is growing fast and among them disease burden and poor quality of life (QOL) are two major interrelated problems.

Objective: To evaluate the effect of a Post Discharged Plan and Follow up Care (PDP&FC) on QOL of a group of elderly patients who were discharged from Colombo South Teaching Hospital (CSTH) in Sri Lanka.

Method: A randomised controlled trial was conducted. A total of 128 patients were randomly allocated into intervention (IG) (n=64) and control groups (CG) (n=64). Primary outcome data were collected by using WHOQOL-BREF questionnaire consisting of four domains of health [Physical (DM1), psychological (DM2), social relationships (DM3) and environment (DM4)]. Data were collected at baseline before discharge, three, and six months following discharge. IG received PDP&FC intervention led by a nurse and CG received routine discharge plan. $p < 0.05$ was considered as statistically significant. Descriptive statistics and t-test were used to analyze data.

Results: The majority were in 60-69 years age group (n=68, 53.1%). IG showed a significant improvement in QOL scores in all domains at baseline vs three and six months respectively [(DM1:3.3±10.4, $p=0.013$; 5.1±11.9, $p=0.001$):(DM2:2.9±9.4, $p=0.018$; 5.2±10.7, $p=0.000$):(DM3:4.7±9.8, $p=0.004$; 4.7±12.5, $p=0.004$) and (DM4:3.3±7.0, $p=0.000$; 4.6±7.7, $p=0.000$)] following the PDP&FC. CG showed a significant improvement in QOL scores at baseline vs three and six months in only DM1 (-4.9±9.6, $p=0.000$; -4.3±9.9, $p=0.001$) and DM3 (-6.3±14.1, $p=0.001$; 10.5±15.3, $p=0.000$) respectively. A significant improvement in QOL scores of all four domains from baseline to three [(DM1:IG:3.3±10.4, CG:-4.9±9.6, $p=0.000$);(DM2:IG:2.9±9.4, CG:-1.0±9.1, $p=0.022$); (DM3:IG:4.7±9.8, CG:-6.3±14.1, $p=0.000$);(DM4:IG:3.3±7.0, CG:-1.6±7.5, $p=0.000$)] and six months [(DM1:IG:5.1±11.9, CG:-4.3±9.9, $p=0.000$);(DM2:IG:5.2±10.7, CG:-0.4±11.1, $p=0.004$); (DM3:IG:4.7±12.5, CG:-10.5±15.3, $p=0.000$);(DM4:IG:4.6±7.7, CG:1.9±9.4, $p=0.000$)] were found in IG compared to CG.

Conclusion: Improvement of QOL measures in IG over CG is significant. Incorporation of PDP&FC intervention is recommended for improving QOL of post discharged elderly patients in Sri Lankan hospital settings.

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