

Patient-to-Patient coaching teaches self-reliance, problem-solving and goal setting skills, leading to a healthier acceptance of their condition and improved quality of life.

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Background

Ostomates are prone to complications, including acute kidney injury (AKI) and hospital readmissions. Impaired quality of life (QOL) is commonly reported, particularly in the early postoperative period. Interventions to aid self-management in stoma patients have been effective in reducing readmission and dehydration-related complications. Peer support programs offer a method to manage the complex factors involved in chronic disease management.

Methods

As part of a remote quality improvement program for new stoma patients, consecutive new patients from multiple centers in the United States were recommended by their usual clinical team to a support service. Patients were paired with a 'patient coach' (a stoma patient) who contacted them weekly by telephone, email or messaging app to offer support and assistance. 70 consecutive patients referred to the program were followed for 60 days and the discussions between patient and coach were analyzed by direct content analysis using the City of Hope Quality of Life- Ostomy 1 domains as a template.

Results

Of 965 patient-coach interactions, physical issues were discussed most often (58% of all interactions). Principle themes were pouching, supplies, hydration, and diet, with concerns about leakage and blockage. Psychological issues associated with ostomy were the next most common (38%) followed by social concerns (15%). Psychological support varies from ostomy acceptance, empowerment of taking initiative in self-care and anxiety coping. Social support concerns most about bag-change in public, going back to work and normal daily activities.

Conclusion

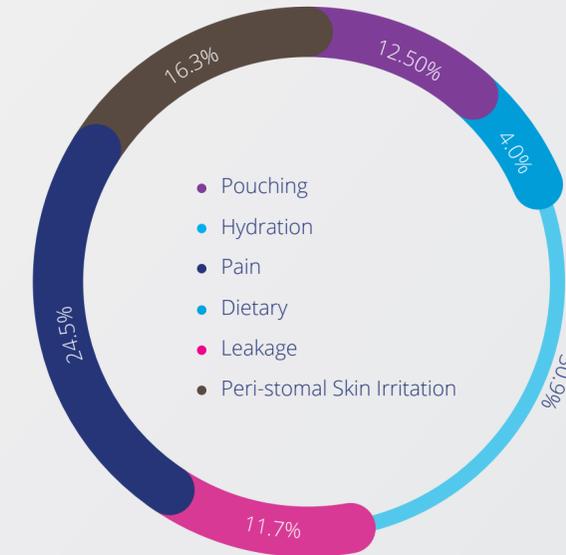
This analysis has highlighted the complexity and varying expectations of ostomates on the journey from accepting their condition to improving their quality of life. Areas of concerns have been generalized from these topics that create a feedback loop to the structure of the coaching program to better address these concerns through goal-based coaching in the future.

Reference

Grant, M., McCorkle, R., Hornbrook, M. C., Wendel, C. S., & Krouse, R. (2013). Development of a chronic care ostomy self-management program. *Journal of cancer education : the official journal of the American Association for Cancer Education*, 28(1), 70-78. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13187-012-0433-1>

Postoperative complications affect 70% of ostomates.
Patient-to-Patient coaching with nursing support improves management.

Categorization of the most discussed physical health support theme in coaching interactions



Anecdotal case studies for psychological and social support from coaching

Psychological Well-being

"At the beginning of the call the patient cried a lot and rated her quality of life a 4 out of 10 feeling overwhelming by her condition. By the end of the phone call, she was laughing more and seemed in much better spirits. She is really looking forward to reversal. She said that this [phone call] made a difference for her and she really appreciated talking to a person who gets it making her feel better and less alone".
"The patient had been struggling with the feeling of physical fatigue, emotional exhaustion and frustration over not being able to do as much she thought she would be able to. She feels like she is failing in this moment. We had a phone call expressing sympathy and went over the disease-related issues with patient. At the end of the phone call, the patient reported feeling more at ease and in better spirits".

Social Well-being

"The patient really appreciated being able to share her parenting frustration with an ostomate with similar age and background".

"The patient goes back to work next week. She will be working in an infusion center, and is a little nervous. We talked about ways to handle working with an ostomy. I told her I also kept supplies and a change of clothes at work. If she needs to empty or do a bag change at work don't be afraid to ask one of her coworkers to cover for her".