



Abstract Title: Impacts of a community collaboration on non-profit organizations, students and people with a chronic disease

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Introduction

Obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) is a chronic condition characterized by the periodic reduction or cessation of breathing during sleep causing recurrent arousal from sleep and hypoxemia (Horner, 2008; Patil, 2007).

The health, social and economic consequences of unmanaged OSA are substantial and include excessive daytime sleepiness, cognitive dysfunction, impaired work performance, increased risk of motor vehicle and occupational accidents and decrement in health-related quality of life (Patil, Schneider, Schwartz & Smith, 2007). Observational and experimental evidence has also implicated OSA as a significant independent risk factor for systemic hypertension, myocardial ischemia and infarction, heart failure and type 2 diabetes mellitus (Somers et. al., 2008).

The gold-standard therapy for the management of OSA in adults is non-invasive positive pressure therapy administered via continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) (Somers et. al., 2008) with OSA, who have underlying significant lung disease or are unable to use CPAP, are treated with bi-level positive airway pressure (BiPAP) therapy.

Unfortunately, these devices are costly and can be unaffordable for those with low income or without private health insurance. The Lung Association of Nova Scotia (LANS) manages a refurbishment program of pre-used CPAP and BiPAP machines donated to them or through the Lions Club. Undergraduate respiratory therapy students from the Dalhousie School of Health Sciences participate in the refurbishment process.

Purpose

To examine the shared and unique experiences of participants in this community-based collaboration including: community members with OSA who received gifts of CPAP or BiPAP machines, respiratory therapy students who participated in their refurbishment and the non-profit organization members who worked to gather and distribute machine gifts.

Approach

Prior to this session members of the non-profit organizations (LANS and Lions Club) who participated in the gathering and distribution of pre-used CPAP or BiPAP

machines, respiratory therapy students who contributed to machine refurbishment, and recipients of CPAP or BiPAP machines, will be invited to complete a survey about the impact of this community collaboration on their lives. Data collected through this survey will inform the development of a 60 minute panel discussion, where representatives from each group will share their perspectives further. Discussions will be recorded and transcripts analyzed using qualitative methods.

Outcomes

Achievements, challenges and impacts will be measured using qualitative and quantitative approaches.

Conclusion

Community collaborations have the potential to positively impact the lives of people with chronic disease, the experiential learning of students, and the satisfaction of persons who serve non-profit community organizations.

References

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