

How nurses working in nurse-led clinics improve health outcomes

Nurse-led clinics are based in a range of primary, secondary and tertiary settings including general practices, outpatient clinics, emergency departments, mental health settings, residential care settings, acute care settings, schools and communities.

Nurses working in nurse-led clinics provide expert nursing care to people experiencing a range of health issues, working collaboratively with the interdisciplinary team where indicated. There is increasing evidence demonstrating improved health outcomes, cost effectiveness, and quality of life for people attending nurse-led clinics.

Examples

Audit: Patients experiencing persistent cough symptoms who attended a nurse-led clinic were successfully assessed, diagnosed and treated without needing to see a respiratory physician resulting in reduced waiting times (Poot, 2011).

Mixed method study: up to 80% of people presenting with mild to moderate mental health conditions to mostly mental health nurses in primary health care demonstrated some benefit from the care received (Dowell, et al., 2009).

Historical comparison: Patients with stage 4 and 5 chronic kidney disease attending a nurse-led clinic and receiving nurse-initiated motivational interviewing to guide and support them to manage their disease, demonstrated improved initiation of self-care strategies such as self-care dialysis and increased physical activity (Pagels, Wång & Wenström, 2008).

Pre and post intervention: Patients with type 2 diabetes attending a nurse-led clinic to receive management for blood pressure demonstrated significantly decreased diastolic and systolic blood pressure and lowered microalbuminuria levels at 12 month review (Mugarza, et al., 2008).

Pre and post intervention: Readmission rates for children who attended a nurse-led asthma management clinic with their families and received consistent education, discharge planning and follow up by nurses dropped from 22% to 6% following establishment of a nurse-led clinic (Chandler, 2007).

Systematic Review: Appropriately trained nurses produce as high quality care as primary care doctors and as good health outcomes for patients. Nurses tend to provide more health advice and achieve higher levels of patient satisfaction compared with doctors. Further research is required to determine cost savings (Laurant, et al., 2005).

Cost-benefit analysis: A general practice will be financially better off if a practice nurse provides substitution for GP clinic services at greater than 50% of the fee received for GP consults (Hefford, et al., 2010).

Pre and post intervention: Following establishment of nurse-led clinic in a primary school in Auckland that focused on education for families managing asthma, skin conditions and ear conditions, significantly decreased visitation to

the city's children's hospital was observed for ENT services and decreased visitation was observed for general medical services for children from the area (Clendon, 2004).

Comparative survey: Women receiving care at a nurse-led sexual health clinic reported greater satisfaction with quality and competence of technical care, provision of information and overall satisfaction when compared with care received at an equivalent doctor-led clinic (Miles, et al., 2003).

Case Study

John is a 56 year old Maori man with four children. He was recently widowed and although he has good whānau support, his youngest child Manu has had several hospital admissions for asthma over the past year and John has struggled to cope with this. On his last admission John and Manu attended the nurse-led asthma clinic where the nurses helped John and Manu develop a clear action plan for managing Manu's asthma and linked John up with the whānau ora nurse working in his neighbourhood for follow up support. Since attending the nurse-led clinic, Manu and John have been managing Manu's asthma well and he has had no further hospital admissions. Qualitative research suggests that nurse-led clinics create a milieu in which patients feel comfortable to discuss their issues, allowing more effective interventions to be developed (Krothe & Clendon, 2006).

Summary

Growing evidence demonstrates that people receiving care at nurse-led clinics demonstrate improved health outcomes for a range of conditions. The evidence supports the establishment of nurse-led clinics as an effective means of providing health care to people in a range of settings. The establishment of nurse-led clinics is a recommended strategy for addressing health needs.

All literature referred to in this fact sheet is available from the NZNO library:
library@nzno.org.nz

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Mission statement

NZNO is committed to the representation of members and the promotion of nursing and midwifery. NZNO embraces Te Tiriti o Waitangi and works to improve the health status of all peoples of Aotearoa/ New Zealand through participation in health and social policy development.

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