Health Coaching to Increase Participation in Online Chronic Pain Management Programs: Lessons Learned

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Conflict of Interest Author Disclosure

• Teresa Bigand: no conflicts
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Educational Objectives

By the end of this presentation:

1. Learner will understand basic concepts of pain self-management.
2. Learner will identify challenges to engaging people with pain in online programs.
3. Learner will recognize strategies that may be used to increase online program engagement.
Introduction

- Chronic pain is estimated to affect 25.3 million American adults (Nahin, 2012).
- Treatment of chronic pain estimated at $32,000 annually per patient (Cost of Chronic Pain, 2015).
- Chronic pain patients suffer wide burden of symptoms.
- Self-management of symptoms could enhance pain outcomes.

http://londoncognitivebehaviouralpsychotherapy.co.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/1st-Diagram.jpg

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Online Pain Management Programs

- Internet-based programs designed to teach patients with chronic pain to self-manage symptoms have been shown to improve outcomes (Ruelman et al., 2012; Wilson et al., 2015).

- Problems (Wilson & Shaw, 2017):
  - Technological difficulties
  - Lack of motivation to engage in online content
  - Dissatisfaction with online program content

- Solution:
  - Trial use of a live health coach to increase participant interest in program

Study Aim

- To explore what types of coaching strategies could enhance participant engagement in an online pain management program
- Small feasibility, pilot project.

Study Methods

- Clinic staff referral to trial (convenience sampling, snowballing technique).
- Study personnel contacted referrals.
- Initial interview and baseline survey completion.
  - Small incentive provided for completion.
- Weekly check-ins with assigned health coach for 4-8 weeks.
- Invitation to complete final surveys after 8 weeks.
  - Communication approach of choice for each participant: email, phone/text, or in-person meetings.
Results

- Total 35 referrals → 8 consented to participate.
  - 2 male, 6 female
- Of these, 5 completed some Goalistics content.
- Three participants completed the post-intervention surveys.
- Two of the three participants opted to meet face-to-face each week with a health coach.
- Remaining six participants preferred weekly phone calls and/or text messages from coaches.

Implications

- Poor participation rate in online pain management programs is common.
- Attempts to improve patient motivation in online programs requires an individualized approach.
- Creating a trusting, non-judgmental staff-provider relationship is paramount.
- Future research needed.
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References