Post-discharge Intervention: Medication Compliance In Elderly Home Health Patients in Buffalo, WY

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Purpose

This intervention seeks to improve medication adherence and reconciliation and decrease hospital readmission among elderly patients discharged from the hospital.

Background

- Buffalo, WY is a small town in Johnson County located in the northeast corner of that state.
- Population ~5,000
- JC's population age 65+ is 19.4% compared to the 13.1% state number
- Community members and health care providers are concerned about the use of medications among the elderly.
- Many patients do not know the purpose or instructions on their medications which leads to poor adherence and higher readmission rates into the hospital.

Methods

- Literature review revealed interventional follow up and pharmacy assistance programs had increased adherence and decreased readmission rates.
- Input was given from the home health director, the discharge planner, and two elderly patients to make a plan for Buffalo.
- Discharge follow up visit includes:
  a. Discussing and quizzing of medication use, dosage, and frequency
  b. Reviewing discharge instructions
  c. Aid in arranging any follow up appointments

View of the Big Horn Mountains in Buffalo, WY

Results

- Some patients were excited about the visits, but others expressed hesitation and viewed the plan as a sign of loss of ability to live independently.
- Implementation found un-reconciled medications in one patient and no adherence in another.
- Each patient was counseled on the importance of letting the home health nurse know if any medications were added and the PCP was notified of the findings.
- The program could be sustained by continuing visits by incoming medical students during their family medicine rotation and home health nurses.

Discussion

- It was difficult to find people to visit with because many hospitalized patients go to senior housing or the nursing home.
- Next steps include follow up phone calls to all discharged patients and more frequent visits with elderly patients at different intervals (one month/three months).