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A Patient Education Intervention program to increase Menopause Knowledge and improve Shared Decision Making in Women

Avi Lamba* and Stuti Dang*
Department of Medicine, University of Miami Miller School of Medicine, Miami, FL, United States
Geriatric Research, Education and Clinical Center, Miami Veterans Affairs Healthcare System, Miami, FL, United States

Abstract

Background: Menopause can be a time of changes, women need information regarding menopause and management of associated symptoms such as hot flashes, mood instability and vaginal dryness. Although there are ways to alleviate these symptoms, many women, due to their limited knowledge related to menopause, are not aware of these treatment options nor able to determine which options would be best for them.

Methods: We developed at the Miami VA healthcare system, a project called the **"M**y Health*e*Vet to **E**nable **A**nd **N**egotiate for **S**hared decision making" or MEANS project, an unblinded non-randomized pilot project, to deliver an educational intervention program surrounding the management of menopause.

The project enrolled 269 female veterans of perimenopausal and menopausal age (45 to 60 years) at Miami VA Healthcare System. The six-month intervention provided educational resources on menopause and shared decision making (SDM) through the MyHealth*e*Vet electronic portal system to women in the Miami VAHS only. Following the intervention, data regarding patient knowledge and use of the MyHealth*e*Vet portal was collected. Besides a pre-post comparison in the intervention group, we also compared the impact of the MEANS intervention on patients at the Miami VAHS to women veterans of the same age who did not receive this intervention.

Results: At the initiation and conclusion of the study, participants completed a test assessing their knowledge of menopause. This test was scored out of 18 points, with a higher score indicating a higher level of knowledge. Score increased from 14.7+/-2.4 before the intervention to 15.8+/-1.8 after the intervention. In addition, the MEANS project increased understanding of SDM and increased use of the MyHealth*e*Vet portal among participants.

Conclusions: These findings are promising and suggest that an educational intervention could be effective in increasing women veterans' access to treatment for the symptoms of menopause.

Biography

Stuti Dang is an experienced geriatrician and researcher, and the Associate Director for Implementation and Outcomes Research in the Geriatrics Research Education and Clinical Center (GRECC) at the Miami VA Healthcare System. She has been a PI or co-investigator on multiple projects funded by the VA, NIH, and DOD for implementing care models that leverage technology for patients with complex chronic conditions and their caregivers. She has extensive expertise in care coordination and telehealth interventions for chronic disease management in the elderly. She seeks to understand the needs and need gaps of frail, older, high-need high-risk veterans and their caregivers to allow aging in place. Her funded technology projects strive to establish usability and utility of various technologies including home telehealth, video, mobile, and web-interventions, in different settings. Her projects are designed with the intent to empower patients and their caregivers to become informed partners in their health care.

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