Substitution of doctors by nurses in diabetes care. A pilot study in a primary care clinic.

Haio: VAN KERSSCHAEVER Greet , KUL
Promotor: REMMEN Roy , U.A.
Praktijkopleider: Genevrois Luigi

Context: For the management of chronic diseases, substitution of care may be an appropriate alternative to safeguard high quality care and higher the efficiency ? amount of patients seen by the physician.

Onderzoeksvraag: Satisfaction of patient and primary care providers and assessment of quality of care, when tasks in care for stable type II diabetes patients are transferred from physician to nurse.

Methode: The diabetes patients were stimulated to visit the nurse every 3 months and their physician once a year. The content of each visit was determined by the guidelines for type 2 diabetes patients of the Belgian GP association. Education, blood samples, BMI and vital checks were the milestones of the nurse visit. Once results were known, a physician would contact the patients for the needed recommendations and follow-ups. With a European Practice Assessment Questionnaire, the satisfaction of patients, nurses and physicians was measured before and nine months after starting the substitution. To assess the quality of care, certain parameters were compared before and after.

Resultaten: Only patients who came minimum two times to the nurse were included, which meant 35 of the 69 selected patients. The patients evaluated the longer duration of the visits and the extra education as a strong point and had the impression they could reach their GP easier by phone. The EPA questionnaire did not allow us to make clear conclusions concerning the healthcare providers satisfaction. We decided to evaluate their findings differently. Nurses loved the challenge but needed more education. The physician enjoyed managing the care, had enough time to do so and evaluated the protocols they worked with as very useful instruments. Concerning the quality of diabetes care: weight, blood pressure, Hb1ac, Total Cholesterol and LDL clearly improved.

Conclusie: In this small pilot study, the substitution of care by nurses resulted in a higher satisfaction by patients and was evaluated positive by nurses and physicians. A general increase in the quality of care was documented.