Representations of illness experience among elders living with multiple chronic conditions: a mixed methods study

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Ayomide Okanlawon is a nursing Ph.D student at the University Of Texas Health Science Center, San Antonio. She is currently practicing at a Registered Nurse in one of the local hospitals in San Antonio. Her area of interest is chronic diseases and self-management in elders. Her overall goal is to develop patient-centered interventions to improve the lives of elders living with chronic diseases in the community.

ABSTRACT

Description of problem/ rationale

Approximately 75% of elders in the United States live with multiple chronic conditions and are at increased risk for poor health outcomes and quality of life. Studies indicate that individuals living with multiple chronic conditions experience different problems with disease management, when compared with individuals with a single chronic condition.

Illness representations are beliefs about cause, nature and management of a condition. Studies indicate that illness representations predict behavioral change and positive health outcomes in individuals with single chronic conditions. Studies on illness representation abroad have indicated that individuals with multiple chronic conditions have different illness representations, when compared with individuals with single chronic conditions.

The goal of the study is to explore the illness representations of elders with multiple chronic conditions. Understanding illness representation in elders with multiple chronic conditions will help to develop patient-centered interventions for this population.

Research question

What are the illness representations of elders with multiple chronic conditions?

Overview/Methods

The study will be a convergent mixed methods design. Using a convergent mixed methods design will help to provide a rich understanding of the illness representation in this population. The quantitative data and qualitative data will be collected at the same time. The QUANT data will be collected, using the Multi-morbidity Illness Perception Scale (MULTIPLES). The QUAL data will be collected using semi-structured interviews which will explore illness representations in elders with multiple chronic conditions. Inclusion criteria include, age, 65 years and older, independently living and community dwelling, presence of at 3 or more chronic conditions, for at least one year. The exemplar chronic conditions are diabetes, hypertension, osteoarthritis, heart disease, heart failure.

Plans for patient/stakeholder engagement

Engagement is addressed through the qualitative component of the study whereby study participants offer their insights about managing multiple chronic illnesses.
No handouts were provided for this presentation:

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