Review: home visiting with multidimensional assessment and multiple visits reduces nursing home admissions in low risk elderly people


QUESTION: In elderly people, what are the effects of preventive home visits on nursing home admission, functional status, and mortality?

Preventive home visits vs control interventions for elderly people

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>RRR (95% CI)</th>
<th>Typical NNT (CI)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nursing home admission</td>
<td>10% (–2 to 20)</td>
<td>Not significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SG: &gt;9 follow up visits</td>
<td>34% (8 to 52)</td>
<td>43 (18 to 204)‡</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functional status decline</td>
<td>6% (–6 to 17)</td>
<td>Not significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SG: multidimensional assessment</td>
<td>24% (9 to 36)</td>
<td>15 (8 to 143)‡</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SG: lower mortality risk (3.4% to 5.8%)</td>
<td>22% (5 to 36)</td>
<td>[12 (5 to 45)]‡</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mortality</td>
<td>9% (–1 to 19)</td>
<td>Not significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SG: mean age 72.7–77.5 y</td>
<td>24% (12 to 35)</td>
<td>24 [14 to 95]‡</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

†SG = subgroup analysis. Other abbreviations defined in glossary; RRR and CI calculated from data in article. Analyses of typical NNTs based on a random effects model; analyses of RRRs based on a fixed effects model, except for the main analyses of functional status decline and mortality, where a random effects model was used.‡Data provided by author.

COMMENTARY

Although evidence regarding the effectiveness of preventive home visitation programmes has been contradictory;† programmes that offer these services are being reduced or cut in Canada because of increased pressure for postacute care services. The systematic review by Stuck et al adds important scientific evidence to the debate. The authors used rigorous methods in the assessment of the methodological quality of individual studies and statistical analyses. However, one limitation of the review is the lack of description and examination of the interventions incorporated in the home visitation programmes. The providers of the interventions ranged from lay community workers to nurse practitioners and geriatricians, and the types of interventions implemented during visits (ie, counselling, behavioural modifications, and referral) may also have been diverse. An assessment of how these factors contributed to the heterogeneity of the studies included in the review would have been helpful. Although a formal cost effectiveness analysis was not done, the authors provide an estimate of the costs of preventive home visits.

Subgroup analyses yielded significant results: different predictors predicted the 3 main end points. Nurses, programme planners, and policy makers must have a clear understanding of the determinants of the outcomes they are attempting to achieve. Further research is needed to show which types of providers and interventions are most effective in preventing functional decline and nursing home admission in the elderly.

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_Evid Based Nurs_ 2002 5: 118
doi: 10.1136/ebn.5.4.118

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