

Supporting Self-Management Strategies For Clients With Long Term Conditions

By Fiona Armon

Introduction: While on placement with a diabetes nurse specialist in a primary health care setting, I noticed that the clients who utilized self-management strategies seemed to have better health outcomes and improved control over their diabetes. This led me to thinking about how the use of self-management strategies affects health outcomes for individuals with long term conditions. The primary health care sector work along side this client group from the initial screen and diagnostic stages of the long term condition and are therefore able to achieve the maximum benefits by utilizing self-management strategies as an early intervention (Walker, Marshall, & Polaschek, 2013).

Literature Review Question: The PECOT framework was used to develop the following question: In adults with long term conditions does the use of self-management strategies improve health outcomes and what are the implications for the primary health care sector? (Schneider, Whitehead, LoBiondo-Wood, & Haber, 2013).

Evidence: The evidence from the literature revealed common themes across a variety of long term conditions, the use of self-management strategies improved health literacy leading to a better understanding of the importance of treatment, medication regimes and lifestyle interventions. This knowledge improved self efficacy and long term condition control with improved health outcomes being reported in physical, social and psychological aspects. The one exception to this was in musculoskeletal conditions such as chronic pain whereby the use of self management strategies had little to no positive effect (Stansfield & Robinson, 2008).

Implications: The New Zealand Ministry of Health (2012) has acknowledged this in the New Zealand Health Strategy Document: road map of actions, which was brought out in 2016, this strategy has been developed to guide change within the health care system so that it can better meet the growing need of our aging population and the ever increasing burden of long term conditions (Ministry of Health, 2016). The strategy is in the early stages of assessing the current health care sectors before introducing any interventions of changes, however changes are coming and the implications for the primary health sector are vast and exciting as practice nurses and nurse practitioners are well positioned to take lead in the support of self-management for clients with long term conditions (Walker et al., 2013).

Recommendations My recommendation is that the primary health care sector needs to prepare for the new direction that the New Zealand Health Strategy is going to take it, this means having a good understanding of the actions outlined in the strategy and the long term goal that has been set out by the Ministry of Health. One way of preparing would be to utilize the Flinders Model to gain knowledge of how to consistently support self-management strategies for clients with long term conditions (Regan-Smith, Hirschmann, Lobst, & Battersby, 2006). In conclusion the prevalence of long term conditions and the aging populations highlights the need for a change in the way the health system manages long term conditions, with primary health care nurses being well positioned to support clients in the self management of their long term conditions.

The Flinders model has 6 key principles as follows:

1. Improved health literacy about the LTC
 2. Collaboration of a care plan that is then implemented
 3. The client is active in shared decision making
 4. The client is aware of and manages signs and symptoms
 5. and manages how the LTC affects social, physical and emotional aspects of their life
 6. Promote health and wellbeing through healthy lifestyle
- (Regan-Smith et al., 2006).

References

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- Schneider, Z., Whitehead, D., LoBiondo-Wood, G. & Haber, J. (2013). *Nursing and Midwifery Research: methods and appraisal for evidence-based practice* (4th ed). Chatswood, Australia: Elsevier
- Stansfield, C., & Robinson, A. (2008). Implementation of an IBD nurse led self management programme. *Gastrointestinal Nursing*, 6(3), 12-18.
- Regan-Smith, M., Hirschmann, K., Lobst, W., & Battersby, M. (2006). Teaching residents chronic disease management using the Flinders Model. *Journal Of Cancer Education*, 21(2), 60-62.

The rationale for choosing this format to present my literature review findings is that a poster provides a focal point from which to further engage the guests in discussion at the evidence-based practice forum and is simple to reproduce for wider distribution in to the primary health sector. The target audience is the primary health sector, particularly the practice nurses, nurse practitioners along with any health professional directly involved in the care of clients with long term conditions. A poster shares a brief overview of the issue which enables the reader to gain a quick understanding of the issue while being easily portable and able to be strategically placed for optimal viewing at a time that suits the viewer for example staff rooms or waiting areas (Pellecchia, 1999).

PECOT category	Information regarding question	Explanation
Population	Adults (24-65) with long term health conditions (LTC).	Including, but not limited to, heart disease, diabetes, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, peripheral vascular disease, cerebral vascular accident, asthma, chronic pain and mental health issues. I have limited population by age despite LTC being across all ages as the youth focused self-management strategies have a strong family component which is not relevant to my search. I have not included over 65 years as I wanted to focus on self-management as an early intervention. I have included both genders.
Exposure (intervention)	Self-management strategies delivered at a primary health care level.	I will be looking at articles that focus on the health outcome of people with LTC using self-management strategies in the community under the support and guidance of the primary health sector.
Comparison / Control	Health outcomes before compared to after utilising self-management strategies.	I will look for articles that describe health outcomes of individuals before and then after the utilisation of self-management strategies.
Outcomes	To highlight the benefits of self-management strategies in LTC and investigate what the implications are for the primary health sector.	Evidence support my observation of self-management strategies improving health outcomes in people with LTC, and if so, how will primary health care support this population in developing self-management strategies for individuals?
Time	N.A	N.A