



NURSE-LED RESPIRATORY INTERMEDIATE CARE TEAMS

Using a respiratory intermediate care team led by nurse specialists to manage the care of patients at home reduces admissions and shortens the length of hospital stay, thereby reducing health system costs.

Background

A respiratory intermediate care team led by nurse specialists in the Oxford City Primary Care Trust in England integrated hospital-based and home care services to enable patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease to remain at home during acute episodes or to return home sooner, thus reducing hospital admissions and facilitating earlier discharges from hospital.¹ Other services included terminal care and patient education. The team included nurses, home-support workers, care managers, occupational therapists and physiotherapists, who provided services six days a week. During the first 22 months of the program, the team received 225 referrals for preventing admissions and 107 referrals for early discharges. Overall, an estimated 1,575 hospital bed days were avoided through prevention of admissions, and 214 bed days were avoided through early discharge. The cost of providing in-home service was estimated to be 62 per cent of the cost of conventional care.

Bottom Line

- Teams of visiting home care nurses with specialty training and other health-care professionals can support patients with chronic respiratory diseases in their homes during acute episodes.
- Effective integration of hospital and community services reduces hospital bed days and health-care costs.
- Specialized nursing services have an important place in the provision of primary health care.

¹ Ward, S., Barnes, H., & Ward, R. (2005). Evaluating a respiratory intermediate care team. *Nursing Standard*, 20(5), 46-50.