

TrueBlue: an intervention using a collaborative model of care in general practice for management of depression in patients with diabetes or coronary heart disease

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The TrueBlue project aims to provide a complete system of care involving practice nurses to

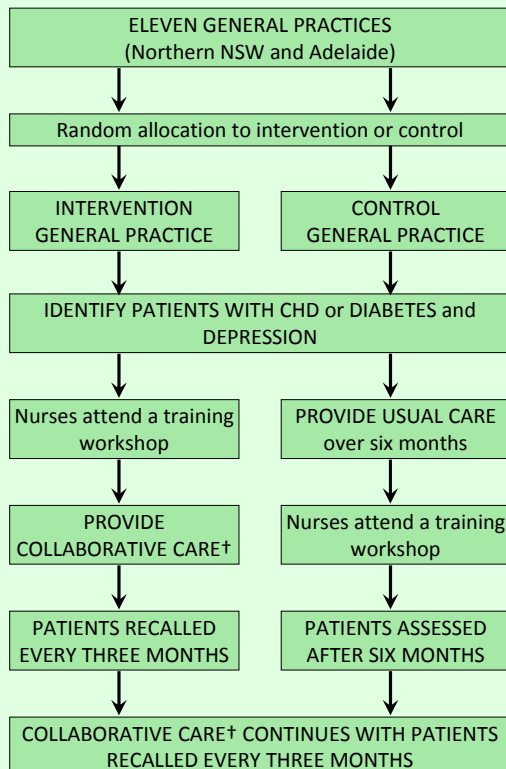
- improve health outcomes for patients with diabetes, heart disease and co-morbid depression;
- provide a model of collaborative care in Australian general practice.

TrueBlue: a randomised control trial

Practices were allocated to

- an intervention group in which nurse-led collaborative care was undertaken;
- a control group in which "usual" care continued.

Flow chart of the TrueBlue Project



(† See the collaborative-care patient pathway)

The Collaborative-Care Patient Pathway

Waiting room survey

- PHQ-9 and SF36v2
- Over the counter medication list

45-minute nurse consult

- Review of anthropometric and biochemical measures
- Review of PHQ-9 scores
- Review of lifestyle risk factors (diet, physical activity)
- Development of up to three personal goals based on review
- Case-management tasks: referrals, setting recall date
- Preparation of the GP management plan and mental health plan

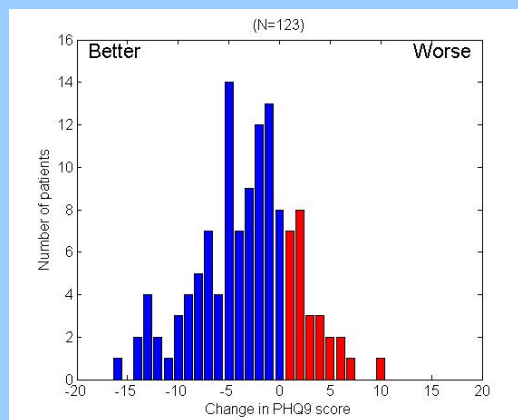
15-minute GP consult

- Clinical management
- Completion of the GP management plan and mental health plan

Recall at 3 month intervals

- Update plan, assess progress to clinical targets, consider goals

Change in depression scores after six months of nurse-led care



- 36% of patients achieved the targeted 50% reduction in PHQ-9 scores after six months of nurse-led care.
- A further 42% of patients have shown improvement in PHQ-9 scores.

- Mean changes in PHQ-9 scores translate into a score after six months that is between 57% and 72% of the initial score, with a mean change of 64%.
- This is an improvement of between 28% and 43% over six months, with a mean improvement of 36%.

- Nurse-led care has demonstrated an average improvement of 36% in PHQ-9 scores over six months.
- Structured recalls allow better monitoring of patients.
- Practice nurses in the intervention arm have increased their knowledge of depression and are more confident about discussing mental health issues.
- Until the control group results are analysed, these conclusions are provisional.