

Patient experiences of the *TrueBlue* collaborative model of care for depression and chronic 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.

The 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 (eg. 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 GP Mental Health Care Plan

15-minute GP consult

- Clinical management
- Completion of the GP Management Plan and GP Mental Health Care Plan

Recall at 3 month intervals

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



Methodology

Patients were randomly selected from the TrueBlue database and telephoned by a

Psychologist. Questions asked related to:

- Seeing the Practice Nurse before the GP
- Setting personal goals
- Use of the PHQ-9 Questionnaire
- Consultation with Practice Nurses
- GP Management Plans
- Three monthly recalls

Interviews were recorded, transcribed and a thematic analysis performed.

Results

Patients felt less rushed in consultations with Practice Nurse

- "You get to talk to a practitioner a lot longer and in a much more relaxed atmosphere. We were able to discuss all aspects of daily living, you know with my blood sugar levels causing me grief and my husband's medical condition"
- "Seeing the nurse first made the whole thing longer than a normal appointment and you could discuss many things that you wouldn't normally bring out."
- "You need to have someone there to say, yeah you're on the right track and you're doing the right things and just, don't beat yourself up if you've had a bad week"

Goal setting enabled patient self empowerment

- "The practice nurse would want to know about your goals and how your general life is and lifestyle and how it was at home and that was really good"
- "If you write down goals and you express them and you review them from time to time it's much more beneficial"
- "I especially knew when I had another appointment coming up that I had to keep on my toes a bit. Getting weighed and stuff every three months instead of every six months or twelve months was sort of more controlled"

PHQ-9 Questionnaire identified issues for discussion

- "It brought up how my home life was and I was having a hard time at home and to be able to discuss that and have someone else to talk to.
- Sometimes just by being able to fill out the questionnaire allows us to highlight, we think it's okay and you think, oh no, I'm not sleeping that well"

CONCLUSIONS

Findings suggest that the TrueBlue collaborative care model can provide quality care for patients with chronic disease and depression.

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