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Effectiveness of patient-centred education in improving self-efficacy and health status in people with Rheumatoid Arthritis: a randomised controlled trial

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Background

The educational needs assessment tool (ENAT) was developed to allow patients with arthritis to identify and prioritise their educational needs. The aim of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of ENAT-focused patient education on self-efficacy, patient knowledge and health status.

Methods

Patients with rheumatoid arthritis (RA) at 6 UK Rheumatology departments were randomised to receive either ENAT-focused education (EG) or usual care (CG) from their clinical nurse specialist at weeks 0, 16 and 32. Self-efficacy (ASES), health status (AIMS2) and patients' knowledge of their RA (PKQ) were assessed at the same time points. Between-group and time effects were

assessed using t-test and ANOVA as appropriate. All follow-up analyses were adjusted to baseline values.

Results

The sample comprised 132 patients meeting 1987 ACR criteria for RA of whom 88 (66%) were female. Median age was 55 years and RA median disease duration 5.9 months. At week 16 there were no between-group differences in self-efficacy scores but at week 32, the mean scores were higher in the EG than the CG (ASES-Pain: $F_{1,98} = 9.13$, $p = 0.003$; ASES-Other symptoms: $F_{1,98}=7.24$, $p = 0.008$). Over time, the EG saw significant improvements in their ASES scores which were not seen in the CG, suggesting that the ENAT helped improve patients' self-efficacy. No significant between-group differences were seen in the health status (AIMS2-SF) scores at week 16. At week 32, the treatment effects favoured the EG in AIMS2-SF symptoms and AIMS2-SF affect domains ($F_{1,98} = 7.41$, $p = 0.008$; and $F_{1,98} = 8.04$, $p = 0.006$ respectively). Over time, improvements in the two domains were seen in the EG but not in the CG. There were no differences in other AIMS2-SF domains. There were no significant between-group differences in the overall knowledge (total PKQ) score. Within-group analyses revealed a decrease in the overall knowledge in the EG at week 32 (no change in the CG), implying the ENAT's ability to target specific educational needs, rather than general knowledge of RA.

Conclusions

We have demonstrated that the use of an easily-completed and quick-to-use questionnaire (ENAT) to direct patient education has the potential to benefit patients in terms of self-efficacy and health status.

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