

Community Health Worker Home Visits for Geriatric Patients in Primary Care: An Impact Evaluation

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INTRODUCTION

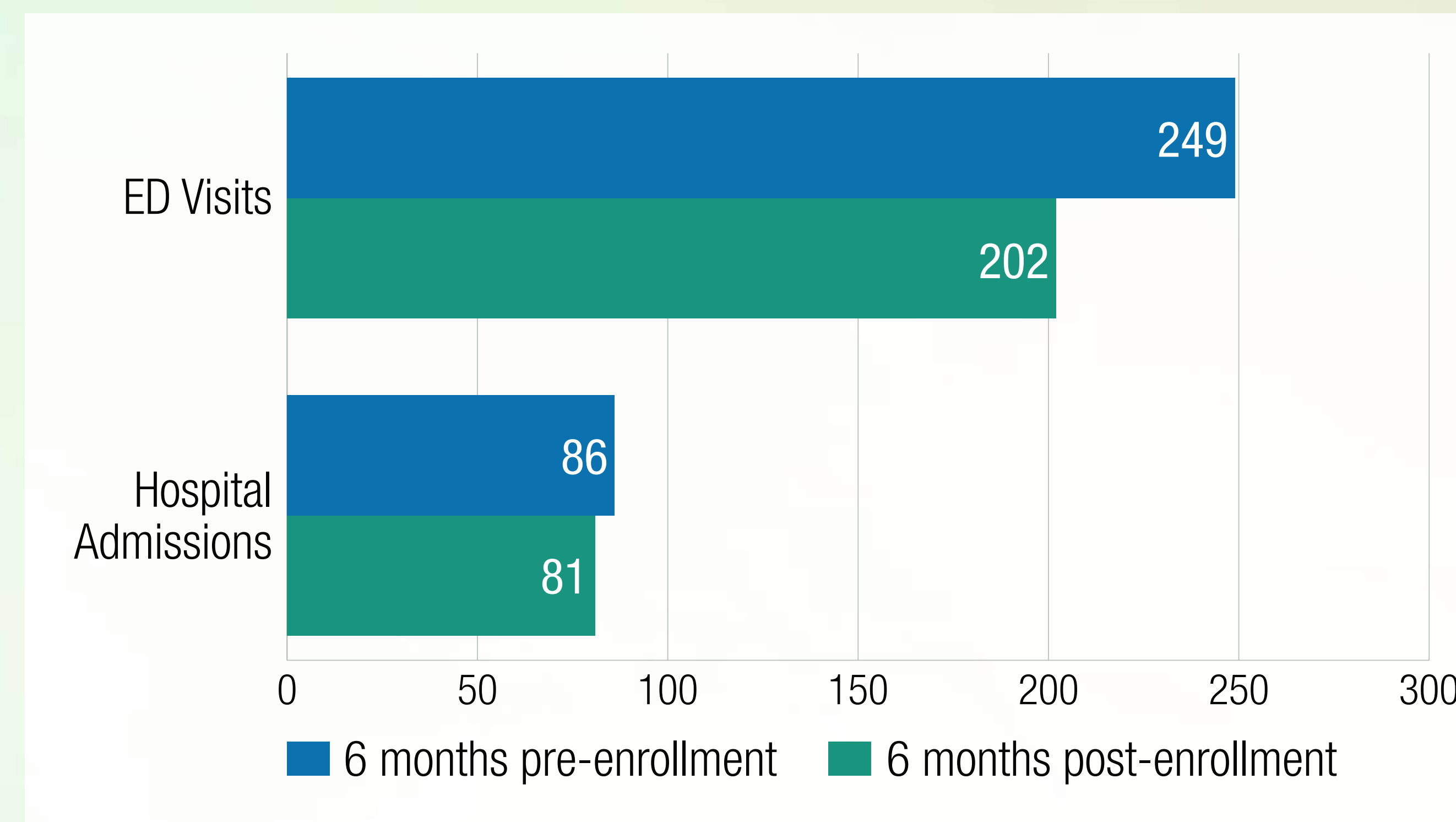
- Community health workers (CHWs) can play a vital role in linking patients with community resources.
- MDTs that consisted of a nurse care manager, clinical pharmacist, and CHW were deployed in 6 primary care offices to perform home visits for geriatric patients (aged 60 or older) with complex needs.
- After more than 3 years of implementation, CHWs performed nearly 1,700 home visits among patients.
- This program evaluation focused on the impact of CHW home visits in geriatric patients' health care.

METHODS

- A one-group pretest-posttest evaluation of health care utilization was performed using data retrieved from the electronic medical record.
- ED visits and hospitalizations were measured 6 months pre-enrollment and 6 months post-enrollment in patients with CHW home visits (n=355).
- Telephone interviews were conducted with patients (n=11).
- Emerging themes were identified from telephone interview transcripts.

RESULTS

- The cumulative number of ED visits and hospitalizations decreased by 18.9% and 5.8%, respectively, throughout the 6-month post-enrollment period.



- One of the major themes that emerged from telephone interviews was the CHWs compassion for the patients. One of the patients said during the telephone interview:

“Some people don't have any interest in you, you know. They only do it because it's something they have to do, so they don't do it with that loving feeling. But some people are ready and willing to deal with you and take care of you and tell you anything they know for your physical well-being or your day-to-day life.”

DISCUSSION

- MDTs with CHWs that perform home visits in geriatric primary care patients can potentially be linked to reduction in health care utilization.
- Through CHW home visits, the patient's environment and non-medical needs can be taken into consideration for care planning and primary care delivery.
- Most patients were satisfied with CHW home visit services. They recognized the CHW's compassion and time devoted toward care delivery.

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