

Patient Health Goals Elicited During Home Care Admission: A Categorization



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HOME care agencies (HCA) have numerous patient engagement opportunities to manage the patient's symptoms and provide much needed health services. Despite these services, HCA patient rehospitalization rates exceed 20% for numerous health conditions.¹ Patient engagement entails patient-clinician interaction and patient participation in managing his/her health to achieve desired health goals.² In home care, a program of patient self-management goal elicitation with behavioral change was shown to decrease hospital readmissions and improve health outcomes.³ Our objective was to categorize elicited patient health goals and identify "clinically informative" goals at a community based HCA.

Methods: The research team with a HCA partner examined patient goals that admitting clinicians documented in the point-of-care electronic health record (EHR) during a 5-month pilot project in 2015. The closely-held for-profit HCA operates over 300 offices in 22 states. Admitting clinicians were employed by the HCA and were predominantly nurses (76%) and physical therapists (23%). Patient goals were available in a text string in a de-identified Excel file that the HCA extracted from their EHR. To develop a coding scheme, a researcher (PS) conducted content analysis on patient goal data: 1-assigned themes to the first 100 patient goals; 2-grouped themes into codes; and 3-specified code categories. A home care nurse (KR) reviewed the coding scheme. PS assigned a goal code to every 10th patient: Sampling was used due to resource constraints. Records without a patient goal were tabulated. PS added new codes that emerged to the coding scheme that KR reviewed. Subsequently, KR and the physician researcher (EC) reviewed the coding scheme independently to identify codes that were informative to their disciplines (clinically important).

Table. Patient Elicited Health Goals Themes

Categories	Occurrences/ Importance
<u>Quality of Life</u>	
Feel better	1 (0%)
Stay in home	5 (2%) ♣
<u>Activities of Daily Living</u>	
Ambulation	24 (9%) ♣♣
Transfer	5 (2%) ♣♣
Strength/endurance	12 (5%) ♣♣
Safety/falls	59 (18%) ♣♣
ADL activities; increase independence	22 (9%) ♣♣
Improve /communication	1 (0%) ♣
<u>Health Management</u>	
Manage disease process	23 (9%) ♣♣
Wound healing	17 (7%) ♣
Manage meds activities	12 (5%) ♣♣
Avoid re-hospitalization	3 (1%)
Mental health	2 (1%) ♣♣
Knowledge of disease process	26 (10%) ♣♣
Free of infection	19 (7%) ♣
Nutritional status	1 (0%) ♣♣
Pain control	15 (6%) ♣♣
Heal	3 (1%)
Have needed surgery	1 (0%)
Better cognitive function	1 (0%) ♣♣
Blank Patient Goal	(8%)

Identified as clinically important by: home care nurse expert ♣, primary care physician expert ♦

nurses and primary care physicians. These findings indicate a shared perspective about the importance of specific clinical information in the treatment of home care patients; however, a Norwegian study found differences in perspectives.⁴ Future research should include perspectives from other disciplines, such as physical therapists.

Conclusion: Research is needed to identify the most effective approach to operationalize patient goal elicitation; clinically

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important goals using a larger group of clinicians; and optimal dissemination of this information in patient care. Useful research would also be to identify associations between elicited patient goals, nursing interventions, and outcomes.

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