

Abstract

Research question: What is the benefit of nurse-led follow-up for patients with a coronary heart condition at Akureyri Hospital?

Objective: The objective of the research was to assess how patients with a coronary heart condition adapted to the lifestyle changes that had to be made due to their condition and how they experienced the follow-up program.

Background: Individuals with a coronary heart condition often have to make great changes to their lifestyles and a goal-oriented follow-up program can aid them in the process of such changes.

Research group: The research group consisted of eight men who had been diagnosed with a coronary heart condition in the past three to twelve months. The average age was 49 years. Furthermore, all of the men, except one, had known risk factors in their lives prior to the illness. The sample was a convenience sample, selected by a nurse from the out-patient ward.

Research method: The research was done on a qualitative basis where the interviews were semi-structured and each subject was interviewed a single time wherein they described their experience of the follow-up procedure. Additionally, the interviews were recorded, typed and divided into subject matters in the search for common denominators. Moreover, body weight, waist measurement and blood pressure were measured at the beginning of the follow-up interview and were performed again in an interview for this research

Major findings: The subjects were pleased with the follow-up program and felt that the educational aspect of the procedure was helpful. What they found the program to be short of though was a lack of information on the sexual and medication aspects. Furthermore, the subjects felt that the support and guidance they received in the follow-up program were vital tools and all of the subjects were concerned with how they would cope after the follow-up. The nurse-patient relationship was satisfactory. However, most of the patients felt it was

necessary for their families to receive information and support as well. All of the subjects claimed to be exercising more and to have improved their diet and only one individual of the group had continued smoking. Furthermore, all but one had gained control over their blood pressure, no longer suffering from hypertension and cholesterol values were normal. In spite of all these changes the subjects had not yet reached the goals that had been set regarding body weight or waist measurement. Psychological discomfort was felt by two of the subjects after taking ill although the researches sensed an underlying anxiety and worry with all of the subjects. Most of them had not gained full strength after they took ill. All of the subjects felt they were on the right path and that the follow-up program had aided them in improving their lifestyle.

Conclusion: It is essential for patients with a coronary heart condition to receive support. A follow-up program is therefore of importance and can aid an individual in the recovery process. According to researchers it is invaluable to receive education and support in order to make the necessary lifestyle changes. Coronary heart patients must, however, also receive an opportunity to express their emotional well-being. Additionally, there is a consensus among researchers that the follow-up program needs to last more than one year and that it is essential for the program to be suited to individual needs.

Main concepts: Coronary heart condition, a follow-up program, rehabilitation, lifestyle changes and educational aspects.