

テレメディスンは薬物療法管理および患者ケアを改善する

薬物療法、血圧および全体的な心臓リスクは自己モニターおよび報告により改善する

Pharmacotherapy, blood pressure and general cardiac risk improve with self-monitoring and reporting

インターネットベースのテレメディスンシステムは、従来の定期的な受診よりも、より適切で有効な薬物療法、より良好な血圧コントロールおよび全体的な心血管リスク低下に繋がるとの研究結果が第61回American College of Cardiology学会で発表された。2つの大規模病院の患者らが組み入れられ、従来通りの管理または従来の管理にテレメディスンを加えた群に無作為に割り付けられた。テレメディスン群患者は心血管疾患リスク軽減に関する助言を受け、家庭用血圧計を与えられ使用法を教わった。彼等は自身の血圧、心拍、体重、1日の歩数、および喫煙数を週2回6ヵ月間にわたり報告するよう求められた。6ヵ月間の介入終了までにコントロール群の処方薬数はほとんど変更されなかったのに対し、テレメディスン群では数は少ないが処方薬数は有意に増加した(2.20 ± 1.20 から 2.34 ± 1.15 , $p=0.004$)。テレメディスン群において処方薬数が増加したのは過剰治療を意味するのではなく、患者の自己モニターおよび報告に基づき薬剤の増加かつまたは調整をより適切に行なったことを反映している、と筆者らは述べている。

Full Text

Internet-based telemedicine systems appear to lead to more appropriate and effective pharmacotherapy, better blood pressure control and an overall reduction in cardiovascular risk compared to conventional, periodic office visits, according to research presented at the American College of Cardiology's 61st Annual Scientific Session.

Patients who reported blood pressure readings more frequently via a web-based portal received more timely treatment decisions and medication adjustments from their health care team compared to a control group of hypertensive patients who had routine office visits. These findings have important implications for clinical practice given that – aside from lifestyle changes – antihypertensive medications are the most effective way to help patients lower their blood pressure.

"The ongoing monitoring and reporting of blood pressure levels seems to bring about important changes in physician prescribing habits, which we think ultimately benefit patients," said Val Rakita, M.D., internal medicine resident at Temple University Hospital and the study's co-investigator. "Based on our findings, physicians appear to prescribe more blood pressure medications for those patients who continue to have high blood pressure despite the medications they are on. In fact, in one subset of patients, not only did we find they were prescribed more blood pressure medications, it also actually led to a larger blood pressure reduction compared to all other groups."

In this study, patients from two large medical centers were recruited and randomized to receive either usual care or telemedicine with usual care. Patients in the telemedicine group received counseling on cardiovascular disease risk reduction and were given a home blood pressure cuff and trained on how to use it. They were asked to report their blood pressure, heart rate, weight, steps taken per day, and tobacco use twice weekly for six months. By the end of the six-month intervention, medications prescribed to those in the control group were virtually unchanged, while there was a small, but significant, increase in the number of medications ordered (2.20 ± 1.20 to 2.34 ± 1.15 , $p=0.004$) for patients in the telemedicine group.

Dr. Rakita says that prescribing more medication in the telemedicine group did not signify overtreatment, but was a reflection of more timely decisions to increase and/or adjust medications based on patient self-monitoring and reporting.

Unlike other types of telemedicine, which may include telephone interactions, this study looked at an internet-based system that supported ongoing communication between patients and health care providers.

"This allows for greater convenience for both sides and most likely led to the better results," Dr. Rakita said. "High blood pressure is one of the most important risk factors for cardiovascular disease. Employing an internet-based patient-physician communication system that can help lower blood pressure could make it possible to reduce patients' cardiovascular risk."

This was a secondary analysis of a telemedicine trial of 241 patients with uncontrolled hypertension (BP $\geq 150/90$ mmHg). More than half of study participants (56.8 percent) were taking one or two blood pressure-lowering medications at the start of the study. The initial average blood pressure was $156/89 \pm 14/11$ among all patients. All patients had baseline and six-month follow-up visits. Monthly reports on blood pressure and treatment guidelines were provided to both the patient and physician in the telemedicine group.

Although there was no significant difference in the decrease in blood pressure between the two groups overall, the primary group of non-diabetic patients using telemedicine was found to have lower blood pressure compared to all other groups. Dr. Rakita said it is reasonable to believe that the use of additional blood pressure medications in the telemedicine group would have translated to an associated drop in blood pressure in these patients had they been followed for a longer period of time.

"The goal of telemedicine is to reduce disease and the burden on the healthcare system in a cost-effective way," he said. "By showing that a relatively low-cost, internet-based telemedicine system can change physicians' prescribing habits and perhaps [lower] blood pressures, this can lead to obvious benefits to patients and the healthcare system."

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ACC2012特集

[News01]

ボラスでの抗凝固薬投与はSTEMI後の梗塞サイズを減少させる

[News02]

骨髓は虚血性心不全治療に有効ではない

[News03]

患者の生存期間はPCI後よりもCABG後の方が長い

[News04]

オンポンバイパス術とオフポンバイパス術の短期予後は同等である

[News05]

血管形成術後の抗血小板薬3剤併用は有効である

[News06]

新たなクラスの血小板阻害薬は有効であることがphase IIIトライアルで証明された

[News07]

テレメディスンは薬物療法管理および患者ケアを改善する

[News08]

閉塞血管については、百聞は一見に如かず

[News09]

ERにおける心臓CTにより胸痛の原因が迅速に同定できる

[News10]

肺塞栓症に対するrivaroxabanの効果は標準治療の効果と同等である

[News11]

妊娠は心筋梗塞のリスクを上昇させる

[News12]

LDL低下療法は早く開始するほどよい

[News13]

モノクローナル抗体はスタチン療法の有効性に上乗せできる

[News14]

高血圧の早期発見早期治療の重要性