Diversity and Inclusion in Primary Care Research

Title

Heart failure and participation in physical activity (The HAPPY + study): Health professional support and availability of community physical activity services.

Abstract

Background Nearly 1 million people in the UK are living with heart failure (HF). Most people diagnosed with HF are managed in primary care. Physical activity can increase wellbeing, reduce hospitalisation and improve mortality rates for patients with HF (PWHF). Studies indicate that PWHF want their community health care practitioners’ reassurance and guidance about physical exercise, but practitioners may lack confidence, or training, on what advice to give or where to refer patients. This study sets out to understand the experiences of GPs and primary care nurses in discussing physical activity with PWHF, and the barriers and enablers to doing so. This work will inform an existing logic model based on the experiences of PWHF, and development of an intervention development to support PWHF to participate in physical activity.

Methods

Qualitative interview study with healthcare practitioners in primary care. This study was included on the NIHR Research Delivery Network (RDN) Portfolio and advertised to practices in their regions. We purposively sampled practices and participants to achieve a range of practice location, area deprivation level, professional role and experience. Semi-structured qualitative interviews were based on a topic guide devised, piloted, and agreed by the research team and patient and public involvement (PPI) members. Interviews were conducted on TEAMS and informed consent was audio recorded. This study has ethical approval from the NHS Health Research Authority and Health and Care Research Wales.

Preliminary results

We have interviewed 11 GPs, 10 primary care nurses, two HF specialist nurses and one urgent care practitioner. These data have been preliminarily coded by team members and our PPI members before formal theme development in NVivo. Completed analysis will be presented. Emerging themes include: (1) Prominence of physical activity in general patient lifestyle discussions; (2) Heart Failure’s low profile; (3) Practitioner uncertainty and constraints; (4) Perceptions of challenges to HF patients.

This study will identify constructive ways in which primary healthcare practitioners can productively discuss PA with PWHF.