Shared Medical Appointments

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What are SMAs

Clinical care (1:1) 1 Doc; 1 Patient

Shared Medical Appointment 1 Doc; 1 Facilitator 6-12 patients

Group education (1:X) 1 Educator; 15-20 patients

A user assessment of the potential for shared medical appointments in Australia

Shared medical appointments An adjunct for chronic disease management in Australia?
Shared Medical Appointments (SMAs)

SMA TEAM
- Doctor
- Facilitator
- Documenter
- Practice Nurse
SMA 2014 Trial Evaluation Results

How do you rate SMAs for Type 2 Diabetes?

1_________________2_________________3_________________4_________5
Poor                    Fair                        OK                         Good                 Great

4.55

Would you continue to come to SMAs if these were available at your centre?

1_________________2_________________3_________________4_________5
Definitely not      Probably not        Perhaps                  Probably                  Definitely

4.86

Do you think SMAs would reduce the number of other visits you would need with your doctor alone?

1_________________2_________________3_________________4_________5
Definitely not      Probably not        Perhaps                  3.81   Probably                  Definitely
What did you enjoy most about SMAs?

- Having more time for asking questions: 4.84
- Seeing the doctor more relaxed: 4.64
- Getting support from others: 4.77
- Hearing experiences of other patients: 4.90
- Getting information from others: 4.97
Patient Evaluations

“It’s good to hear other people’s issues. It makes you realise you’re not alone and you’re not as bad off as you think.” 42 man with HIV, scrotum removed, cancer, etc.

“As a result of this group I’m more aware of my condition and therefore managing it with more confidence.” 70- y.o. ex-Nurse.

“I got so much out of this because I heard answers to questions that I always forget to ask the doctor.” Indigenous man
Provider Evaluations

All agreed SMAs should ‘decrease health costs in the long term’ because:

“(a) they lead to an increase in efficiency and (b) it helps us do health promotion/education better.”

Dr Andrew Binns

Most also agreed SMAs would decrease standard medical visits:

“If done by the patient’s own GP, they would definitely decrease other visits.”

All agreed they “would like to continue running SMAs in some form in their practice’.

“SMAs have given me a comfortable push to increase my knowledge. I talk with patients one to one. And while you always do your best it doesn’t matter that much if I get my facts wrong or advice slightly off, as I won’t see them again for ages – and they have no one to check with anyway. In the SMA situation you can’t do that. Someone in your patient group or team are going to know more than you about some things – you can’t fudge it! After the 2nd SMA I read deeply about diabetes and am continuing to do so in preparation.”
Advantages of SMAs

A. For Patients

• Extra time with own doctor and more relaxed pace of care;
• Peer support and feedback from patients with similar conditions;
• Answers to questions they might not have thought to ask (because others in the group ask)
• Greater self-management education and attention to psychosocial issues
Advantages of SMAs

B. For Clinicians

• Better management of waiting lists;
• Reduced repetition of information/advice;
• Can contain costs while increasing clinical income;
• A chance to get to know patients better in an interactive setting;
Perceived Barriers to SMAs

**Barrier:** You can’t use Medicare item numbers to bill for a group consultation

**Barrier:** Patients will be concerned about confidentiality.

**Barrier:** Australians are different to Americans and are much more reticent to ‘open up’ in a group.

**Barrier:** Doctors are resistant to changing their ways after years of operating in the one fashion.

**Barrier:** There will be special attention from Government because of concern of over-servicing.

**Barrier:** There will be problems attracting patients.
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- ‘Diabesity’, metabolic and cardiovascular diseases
- Depression, mood & anxiety disorders
- The microbiome in mental health and chronic & lifestyle-related disease
- Personalised medicine: applications of the ‘omics’
- Coaching to change lives: health behaviour change
- Shared Medical Appointments: a quantum leap forward

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