Home Hospital Care for Patients Experiencing Homelessness: Proof of Concept

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Background:

Lack of stable housing may limit access to home hospital care for people experiencing homelessness

Goal:

Evaluate the preliminary feasibility of a care pathway that delivers hospital-level care in temporary housing for patients experiencing homelessness

Methods:

- Partnered with two housing organizations to provide single-room housing for patients
- Conducted semi-structured interviews (n=7) with patients, clinicians, and housing staff; rapid qualitative analysis using structured matrices to identify common patterns and variation

"They [home hospital clinicians] treated you like human beings, not like a case"

— PATIENT 1



"It lacks the scariness of being in a hospital surrounded by monitors but still has the professional care of the hospital"

— PATIENT 1

Results

Care delivery and safety

- Clinicians described care as clinically comparable to standard home hospital with no reported patient safety concerns

Patient selection

- Shelter staff described challenges identifying appropriate candidates for home hospital, particularly given behavioral health and substance use challenges

Patient experience

- Patients reported positive experiences with care, one patient said they prefer the brick and mortar hospital for future care due to dietary preference for hospital food

Operational considerations

- Clinicians and shelter staff identified challenges with referral coordination and timely communication. Two person clinical visits were implemented as a staff safety precaution but increased staffing demands

Conclusion

- Home hospital care for patients experiencing homelessness in a temporary housing setting was perceived as feasible, clinically comparable to standard home hospital care, and beneficial for certain patients. Patient selection, infrastructure, coordination are important implementation considerations
- Further study is needed to assess outcomes and broader implementation
- Findings are exploratory and based on a small sample size

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