

Telephone assistance to decrease burden in informal caregivers of stroke older people: Monitoring and diagnostic evaluationOdete Araújo¹, Isabel Lage¹, José Cabrita², Laetitia Teixeira³¹Escola Superior de Enfermagem, Universidade do Minho, Braga, 4710-|057 Braga, Portugal; ²Faculdade de Farmácia, Universidade de Lisboa,1649-003 Lisboa, Portugal; ³Instituto de Ciências Biomédicas Abel

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After hospital discharge many stroke survivors return home and need support with at least one activity of daily living. Most of them require

help from informal caregivers who are often unprepared for the demands of providing care. Evidence has shown that combining enhanced informal caregivers' practical skills, face-to-face interventions and telephone support can reduce negative consequences for caregivers, such as burden or depression. Objective: To evaluate the impact of an intervention to reduce burden by using telephone support delivered to informal caregivers, who take care of older people after a stroke, at home.

Methods

A quasi-experimental method, which included 3 months of follow-up, was conducted with 174 patients. The Control group (n = 89) received usual care available provided by healthcare units and the InCARE programme was implemented in the experimental group (n = 85), 1 week, 1 and 3 months, telephone support, counselling caregivers on the 3rd, 6th, 8th and 10th weeks at home. It aimed to facilitate the caregiver's adjustment to stroke demands, increasing knowledge and practical skills to support their decision-making. Data collection took place between February 2014 and December 2014.

Results

The experimental group had a significant lower level of burden in comparison with the control group 1 and 3 months after InCARE intervention.

Conclusions

Telephone support does not replace face-to-face interventions implemented based on structured programs, however, they are an aid for diagnosis and an important complement to all types of interventions that promote health gains of this group of informal caregivers and stroke survivors.

Trial registration

Current Controlled Trials NCT02074501

Keywords

Stroke survivors, elderly, informal caregivers, burden, pilot study