

Exploring Clinician Perceptions of a Veteran Peer Support Intervention to Inform Implementation

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Introduction

Chronic pain affects a large number of veterans and negatively impacts their quality of life. To address chronic pain, peer support models have been utilized and show promising results. ECLIPSE (Evaluation of a Coach-Led Intervention to Improve Pain Symptoms) is focused on a peer support intervention that involves peer delivery of pain self-management strategies for veterans dealing with chronic musculoskeletal pain. This intervention aims to positively impact overall pain levels, as well as self-efficacy, social support, pain coping, patient activation, health-related quality of life, and health service utilization. The current study serves the pre-implementation aim of ECLIPSE; the purpose of this study was to explore clinician perceptions regarding ECLIPSE to inform implementation into VA clinics.

Methods

This study utilized a qualitative approach to interview clinicians at a single US VA Medical Center. A research assistant conducted individual, in-person, semi-structured interviews with clinicians, which fulfills the third aim of a larger research project. Analysis consisted of developing descriptive coding and themes emerged through the evaluation of coded segments.

Results

Preliminary results for n=9 (second round of interviews to be completed in the summer) have revealed 4 themes. Clinicians: i) have an overall positive view of this type of intervention; ii) believe peer coaches should be properly selected and supported; iii) have valuable feedback on aspects of implementing and maintaining this type of intervention within clinics; and iv) have considerations for maximizing intervention utility.

Conclusions

Interventions that involve peer coaching may be incredibly beneficial for those suffering with chronic pain. However, to determine the ease of implementation of these types of interventions into clinic settings, understanding clinician viewpoints is a necessary aspect to ensure success. Feedback collected in this study can also facilitate implementation on a broader scale, allowing more veterans to benefit from this peer support intervention.