(W06) BUILDING BRIDGES IN MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS: TRANSITIONAL PLANNING TO DEVELOP CAPACITY IN LONG-TERM CARE

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Background: A number of multiple sclerosis (MS) clinic patients in Central Alberta are living with advanced MS and require long-term care (LTC). Because of a lack of specialized services, many of these patients reside in geriatric-focused facilities. This presents unique challenges for the MS clinic team to empower self-management capacity within a clinic setting. Quality of life may be maximized through collaboration between the MS clinic team and caregivers in LTC facilities. The goal of this initiative is to promote patient-focused care and develop capacity among caregivers. A pilot project was initiated by the MS clinic team, which facilitates collaboration by attending the LTC facility to assist with care planning and provide disease-specific, evidence-based information. This project has been ongoing since 2007 and to date has involved 16 LTC sites and 38 MS patients and their families. Objectives: The objective of this project is to describe key elements of the pilot program and, using a single case study design, highlight the need, complexity, and potential impact of this service for patients. A second component is to describe the relative impact of the program, utilizing data gathered through a questionnaire completed by the facility caregivers regarding patient support. Methods: A case study protocol was developed utilizing archival data and documents, participant and/or staff observation, and patient feedback. This descriptive single case study will be presented to highlight both the need and complexity of management of care within a therapeutic environment. A questionnaire was also developed at the onset of the project for completion by the site staff. The results have been analyzed and will be presented. Results: Interactions with, and feedback from, individuals receiving the care, family, and caregivers suggests that the program fills a gap in services not normally provided within LTC. Conclusions: Implications include the potential provision of similar services across a geographically dispersed provincial health authority. Therefore, we are in the process of developing a program logic model and an operational plan for further evaluation.

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