

**UNIVERSITA' CATTOLICA DEL SACRO CUORE
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Dottorato di ricerca in Psicologia

Ciclo XXX

S.S.D.: M-PSI/06

**Patient engagement support for older adults:
Development and implementation of an intervention in
an integrated-care context**

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Anno Accademico 2016-2017



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Abstract

Aim: To contribute knowledge about how patient engagement support can be provided to older adults, by describing the contents of interventions aimed at patient engagement for older adults, developing a patient engagement intervention, and studying its early-stage implementation.

Methods: In study 1, a systematic review of the literature was performed. In study 2, a qualitative study with focus groups involving healthcare professionals and individual interviews to older adults was conducted to develop the intervention. In study 3, a qualitative study of a participatory process was accomplished to explore the early-stage implementation of the intervention in one integrated-care organization.

Results: The main finding of study 1 was that the emotional dimension was less used than the educational and behavioural dimensions among the 35 patient engagement interventions for older adults. The findings from the study 1 were used, together with a theory of patient engagement, to develop a draft of an individual patient engagement intervention for older adults (*PHEinAction*). In the study 2, the views of healthcare professionals and older adults were used to refine and finally endorse it. The final version of *PHEinAction* consisted of at least two face-to-face one hour individual sessions one month apart, plus a set of personalized home-based exercises aimed to facilitate a range of emotional, behavioural, cognitive changes for patient engagement. Finally, the study 3 observed how the existing patient education practice of inpatient, outpatient and territorial settings differently challenged the implementation. A certain degree of flexibility of *PHEinAction*'s contents and procedures was required to address these challenges.

Implications: *PHEinAction* shows promise as an intervention to improve patient engagement in older adults. However, more research is needed, especially focusing on long-term implementation studies and, most of all, evaluation of effects with experimental studies.

Abstract (Italian version)

Obiettivo: Accrescere la conoscenza relativa a come supportare il coinvolgimento attivo dei pazienti anziani, descrivendo i contenuti di interventi per il coinvolgimento attivo con pazienti anziani attualmente presenti sul panorama scientifico, sviluppando un nuovo intervento e studiando le prime fasi della sua implementazione.

Metodo: Nel primo studio, in risposta al primo obiettivo, è stata condotta una analisi sistematica della letteratura scientifica sul tema. Il secondo studio ha visto la conduzione di focus groups con professionisti sanitari e interviste individuali a pazienti anziani per raffinare e validare qualitativamente un nuovo intervento per il coinvolgimento attivo. Nel terzo studio, si è studiata l'implementazione iniziale dell'intervento in un contesto italiano di cure integrate attraverso una ricerca partecipativa.

Risultati: Il principale risultato del primo studio è stato la sbilanciata attenzione tra i 35 interventi per il coinvolgimento attivo presenti in letteratura per le componenti emotive a favore di quelle educative e comportamentali. È sulla base dei risultati del primo studio e di un modello teorico che è stata sviluppata una prima bozza di intervento. Nel secondo studio, la prospettiva di professionisti sanitari e pazienti anziani ha fornito indicazioni per modificare l'intervento e renderlo potenzialmente implementabile nella pratica clinica. L'intervento che è risultato consiste di almeno due incontri mensili individuali, più un set personalizzato di esercizi riflessivi per il paziente da compilare in autonomia a casa. Infine, il terzo studio ha osservato come le diverse pratiche educative presenti nei diversi setting – ospedaliero, ambulatoriale, territoriale - di un contesto di cura integrato hanno generato diverse, specifiche, difficoltà per l'implementazione. Un certo sforzo di flessibilità e personalizzazione dei contenuti e delle procedure dell'intervento è stato dunque richiesto.

Implicazioni: L'intervento sviluppato mostra potenzialità nel supportare il coinvolgimento attivo dei pazienti anziani, ma necessita di ulteriori studi relativi all'implementabilità sul lungo termine e alla sua efficacia.

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