

Optimal Prevention & Treatment in Medically Complex Alzheimer Patients -OPTIMAL

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Description

Dementia is a leading cause of death among older adults. However, less is known about the mortality risk associated with milder forms of cognitive impairment and the impact of additional comorbid conditions, such as depression and cardiovascular disease, on cognitive impairment and mortality risk. This study determined the associations between cognitive impairment and increased mortality and examined the provision of cancer screening services and influenza vaccination among older adults with and without cognitive impairment.

Specific Aims

1. Describe the 15-year life expectancy for older adults with cognitive impairment, with and without depression and cardiovascular disease.
2. Determine the occurrence and outcome of cancer screenings (breast, colon, and prostate) and influenza vaccination among older adults with and without cognitive impairment, depression, and cardiovascular disease.
3. Analyze chronological trends in use of preventive health services among older adults with and without cognitive impairment, depression, and cardiovascular disease.

Findings

- Both mild and moderate-to-severe cognitive impairment were associated with an increased risk of death.
- Mirroring trends in the general population, the use of cancer screening tests increased over time among these older adults, although fewer patients with moderate-to-severe cognitive impairment received the screening compared to cognitively healthy patients.

Main Objective

Determine the associations between cognitive impairment and increased mortality. Examine the provision of cancer screening services among older adults with and without cognitive impairment.

Chronic Conditions Considered

Cognitive impairment
Depression
Cardiovascular disease
Cancer

Preventive Service Considered

Breast cancer screening
Colon cancer screening
Prostate cancer screening
Influenza vaccination

Study Design, Data Sources & Sample Size

Analytic epidemiologic study
Cohort of 3,957 older adults, aged 60 to 102 years, cared for in the primary care clinics of an urban, public safety net hospital.

Strategies Addressed from the HHS Strategic Framework on Multiple Chronic Conditions

- 4.C. Increase clinical health research

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Implications

Messages intended to promote cancer screening among younger, healthier populations may have unintended consequences, as significant numbers of older adults continue to receive these tests even though their short remaining life expectancy suggests such tests have no benefit and may have harms.

Publications (as of September 2013)

Sachs GA, Carter R, Holtz LR, Smith F, Stump TE, Tu W, Callahan CM. Cognitive impairment: an independent predictor of excess mortality: a cohort study. *Ann Intern Med.* 2011 Sep 6;155(5):300-8.

Brown JM, Stewart JC, Stump TE, Callahan CM. Risk of coronary heart disease events over 15 years among older adults with depressive symptoms. *Am J Geriatr Psychiatry.* 2011 Aug; 19 (8): 721-9.