

Establishing a Nurse Cardiac Rehabilitation Ambassador Program to increase promotion and uptake of Cardiac rehabilitation following an acute hospital admission - increasing nurse knowledge of cardiac Rehabilitation would to improve their capacity to promote the benefits of cardiac rehabilitation during the patient's hospital stay.

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Abstract

Cardiac Rehabilitation (CR) is considered an integral part of secondary treatment of heart disease. Despite being standard care, participation remains low. Encouraging patients to enrol in CR during their hospital stay is linked to higher participation.

Purpose: As a provider of cardiac care, we identified that increasing nurses' knowledge of CR would improve their capacity to promote CR during patient's hospital stay.

Methods: Applying a quality improvement methodology, the program consisted of an immersion experience for nurses to shadow CR nurses working in rehabilitation centre providing best practice CR for patients.

Evaluation: Cross-sectional surveys and individual interviews were conducted with participants and Nurse-Unit-Managers (NUMs). Key outcomes: ambassadors' knowledge and confidence to promote CR participation to patients on wards. NUM's perceptions of the impact of the program.

Results: NUMs and CR-coordinator selected a 13 nurses to participate. In 2022 4 participants attended 5 days. Following evaluation, the program was modified to 3 days for participants in 2023, which enabled 9 participants to attend.

All participants described not fully understanding the nature of CR and its impact on patients until they attended a program. Following attendance 100% of participants consider it essential or important for patients to attend a CR program. They also reported feeling more confident to discuss CR with patients and colleagues and encourage patient participation following the immersion experience.

Conclusion: The immersion experience represents a feasible and sustainable approach to establishing CR ambassadors on acute cardiac wards with skills to promote CR participation to colleagues and patients.