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Improving Function After Hospitalization in Older Adults With Co-Morbidities

Introduction:

Hospitalization in an increasingly frail, older population leads to functional decline. In fact, hospitalized older adults are 59.8 times more likely to develop disability than those who are not hospitalized. Medicare spends over \$14 billion dollars on current models of post hospitalization home health care, but less than half of these beneficiaries experience sustained functional gains. We have designed a novel home therapy program that incorporates strength, motor and behavioral training into the existing function focused model, at both higher doses and frequency of intervention that is completed within the same “episode of care” covered under the current model.

Objective:

To determine if a structured physical therapy intervention, initiated upon hospital discharge, improves self-reported function at the end of one 60-day episode of care more than usual home physical therapy.

Hypothesis:

This novel intervention will improve function, strength and endurance outcomes compared to regular therapy as well as decrease emergency room visits and re-admissions

Study design:

This pilot study, funded by an Abington Memorial Hospital Innovator’s Circle Grant, will include 20 participants, 10 in control group and 10 in the experimental group, who meet pre-specified inclusion criteria. As of today, we have 9 participants who are actively participating in the study.

Future directions:

We believe this new, sustainable model of home therapy will not only improve overall function in our elderly patients but will aid both micro and macro health systems adapt to the current paradigm shifts in health care and health care payments.