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Effects of a tailored telephone education intervention on medication adherence and disease activity in patients with rheumatoid arthritis: A randomized controlled trial

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Rheumatoid arthritis is a chronic progressive autoimmune disease. Treatment is effective to control the progress of RA when patients follow medication closely. However, medication adherence is not optimal in patients with rheumatoid arthritis. Poor medication adherence will limit medication efficacy, increase disease activity and the prevalence of disability and mortality. An effective education intervention to improve medication adherence is warranted. However, the effect of telephone education intervention on medication adherence is unknown in patients with rheumatoid arthritis. 92 RA patients recruited from a rheumatology ward in Southwest China were randomized to the intervention (n=46) or the control group (n=46). Patients in the control group received the standard care. Patients in the intervention group received both standard care and a 12-weeks tailored telephone education intervention including four telephone education sessions. The content of the education included: Knowledge about rheumatoid arthritis, treatment goal, the importance of medication taking, side effect management and reminder of medication taking. Medication adherence was measured by compliance questionnaire rheumatology at the 12th and 24th week after patients' discharge. Disease activity was measured by Disease Activity Score 28, erythrocyte sedimentation rate and C-reaction protein at the baseline, 12th and 24th week after patients' discharge. Patients in the intervention group had significantly higher medication adherence compared to the control group at the 12th, 24th week after 12-week telephone education intervention (all $P < 0.05$). Erythrocyte sedimentation rate was significant lower than control group at 12th weeks ($P < 0.05$). No difference between two groups was detected in other disease outcomes at the 12th, 24th week ($P > 0.05$). The tailored telephone education intervention effectively improved medication adherence in patients with rheumatoid arthritis. However, no significant benefits on disease activity were detected. Thus, further studies should explore the long term effects of education intervention on medication adherence and disease activity.

Biography

Yuqing Song is a Postgraduate student at the West China School of Nursing, Sichuan University. She is doing research work in the areas of Nursing Education, and Clinical Nursing. She has published several articles.

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