

GRACE Team Care: Integrating Medical and Social Care for Vulnerable Seniors

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Older adults often do not receive effective medical treatment for their conditions. Low-income elders frequently have socio-economic stressors, low health literacy, multiple chronic illnesses and limited access to healthcare. These factors contribute to the disproportionately high utilization of acute care services and healthcare costs in this population. Geriatric Resources for Assessment and Care of Elders (GRACE) Team Care was designed to provide a new integrated primary care model for low-income seniors with multiple chronic conditions. GRACE Team Care uses in-home assessments by a nurse practitioner and social worker to develop an individualized plan of care guided by 12 care protocols for common geriatric conditions and informed by a geriatrics interdisciplinary team led by a geriatrician and including a pharmacist, mental health social worker, and community-based services liaison. In a randomized controlled trial, high risk patients enrolled in GRACE had improved quality of care and fewer hospitalizations and readmissions and reduced hospital costs compared to the control group.

Biography:

Steven R. Counsell, MD is the Mary Elizabeth Mitchell Professor and Chair in Geriatrics at Indiana University (IU) School of Medicine and Founding Director of IU Geriatrics, a John A. Hartford Foundation Center of Excellence in Geriatric Medicine. He serves as Chief of Geriatrics and Medical Director for Senior Care at Wishard Health Services, a public safety net health system in Indianapolis, Indiana. Dr. Counsell recently returned from Australia where as an Australian American Health Policy Fellow he studied "Innovative Models of Coordinating Care for Older Adults." Prior to his sabbatical, he served as Geriatrician Consultant to the Indiana Medicaid Office of Policy and Planning. Dr. Counsell is a fellow of the American Geriatrics Society (AGS), immediate past Chair of the AGS Public Policy Committee, and current member of the AGS Board of Directors. Dr. Counsell has conducted large-scale clinical trials testing system level interventions aimed at improving quality, outcomes, and cost-effectiveness of healthcare for older adults. He was the PI for the NIH funded trial of the Geriatric Resources for Assessment and Care of Elders (GRACE) care management intervention shown to improve quality and outcomes of care in low-income seniors, and reduce hospital utilization in a high risk group. Dr. Counsell was a 2009-2010 Health and Aging Policy Fellow and is currently working to influence health policy to improve integration of medical and social care for vulnerable elders.