COMprehensive Post-Acute Stroke Services (COMPASS) Study

Background:
Stroke patients who are discharged home from the acute setting face significant challenges navigating residual neurological deficits, secondary prevention, and other chronic conditions. Post-discharge management of these patients is often fragmented, leading to increased healthcare costs, hospital readmissions, and sub-optimal utilization of rehabilitation and community support services. The COMPASS Study is a cluster-randomized pragmatic trial to assess the effectiveness of a comprehensive, evidence-based, post-acute care model on patient-centered outcomes.

Methods:
Forty-one hospitals in North Carolina were randomized to either implement the COMPASS care model or continue their usual care. Hospital staff at all sites ascertained and enrolled patients discharged home with a clinical diagnosis of stroke or transient ischemic attack (TIA). The recruitment goal is 6000 patients over 12 months, 3000 in each randomization arm. Patients discharged from intervention hospitals received 2-day telephone follow-up, a comprehensive clinic visit within 2 weeks that includes standardized neurological evaluation, assessments of social and functional determinants of health, delivery of an individualized eCare Plan, and additional follow-up telephone calls at 30 and 60 days post stroke discharge. Patients discharged from hospitals in the usual care arm received the standard of care in place at that hospital and represents the control group for the study. Patient-centered outcomes are collected from telephone surveys administered 90 days post-stroke discharge. The primary endpoint is patient-reported functional status as measured by the Stroke Impact Scale 16.

Discussion:
Given the high societal and economic burden of stroke, identifying a care model to improve recovery, independence, and health-related quality of life is critical for stroke survivors and their caregivers. The pragmatic trial design provides a setting to evaluate the effectiveness of the COMPASS care model and facilitates rapid implementation into clinical practice if successful.

Trial registration on Clinicaltrials.gov: NCT02588664

Keywords: stroke, transitions of care, rehabilitation, functional status, pragmatic trial

Website: https://www.nccompass-study.org/