Reviewer's report

Title: Nurse-led self-management programme for patients with an implantable cardioverter defibrillator; an exploratory study.

Version: 1 Date: 25 August 2006

Reviewer: Kate Lorig

Reviewer's report:

General
1. Is the question posed by the authors new and well defined? Yes

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described, and are sufficient details provided to replicate the work? Yes

3. Are the data sound and well controlled?
   This is a small pilot study of feasibility. There was no control group and no long term effects were reported. In most cases these would be major flaws, insufficient power, lack of control group and lack of long term follow-up. Just the same, this is an interesting study. The authors understand the limitations and have stated these.

   The strength of this study is that was conducted with an understudied and difficult population. In fact, a large scale randomized trial would be almost impossible. I think that the article might be stronger if the following were done. Re-title it as a Nurse/Peer-led intervention. Give effect sizes for the changes. I did a few and they seem to range from .2 to .4 which is enough to be encouraging. This also gives the reader some idea if this is even worth trying. Maybe a discussion of the clinical meanings of these changes. Shorten the article by one third. This is a long paper for a small study. I would position the paper as how something can be learned from even a small study that is well done.

   4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition? Yes

   5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data? Maybe the conclusions are a bit optimistic given no long term follow up. Would there be any way of getting data from these folks after six months or a year?

   6. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found? Consider changing the title as suggested above.

   7. Is the writing acceptable? Yes

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

I am one of the authors of the Chronic Disease Self-Management Program, and have conducted several studies involving this program.