

Informal Carers in Telemonitoring of Users with Pacemakers: Characteristics, Time of Services Provided and Costs

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Abstract : Objectives: The purpose of this trial was to evaluate the burden borne by and the costs to informal caregivers of users with telemonitoring of pacemakers. Methods: This is a controlled, non-randomised clinical trial, with data collected from informal caregivers, five years after implantation of pacemakers. The Spanish version of the Survey on Disabilities, Personal Autonomy, and Dependency Situations was used to get information on clinical and social characteristics, levels of professionalism, duration and types of care, difficulties in providing care, health status, economic and job aspects, impact on the family or leisure due to informal caregiving for patients with pacemakers. Results: After five years of follow-up, 55 users with pacemakers finished the study. Of which, 50 were helped by a caregiver, 18 were included in the telemonitoring group (TM) and 32 in the conventional follow-up group (HM). Overall, females represented 96.0% of the informal caregivers (88.89% in TM and 100.0% in HM group). The mean ages were 63.17 ± 15.92 and 63.13 ± 14.56 years, respectively ($p = 0.83$) in the groups. The majority (88.0%) of the caregivers declared that they had to provide their services between 6 and 7 days per week (83.33% in TM group versus 90.63% in HM group), without significant differences between both groups. The costs related to care provided by the informal caregivers were 47.04% higher in the conventional follow-up group than in the TM group. Conclusions: The results of this trial confirm that there were no significant differences between the informal caregivers regarding to baseline characteristics, workload and time worked in both groups of follow-up. The costs incurred by the informal caregivers providing care for users with pacemakers included in telemonitoring group are significantly lower than those in the conventional follow-up group. Trial registration: ClinicalTrials.gov NCT02234245. Funding: The PONIENTE study, has been funded by the General Secretariat for Research, Development and Innovation, Regional Government of Andalusia (Spain), project reference number PI/0256/2017, under the research call 'Development and Innovation Projects in the Field of Biomedicine and Health Sciences', 2017.

Keywords : costs, disease burden, informal caregiving, pacemaker follow-up, remote monitoring, telemedicine

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