Comparisons of the cost-effectiveness among hospital chronic care, nursing home placement, home nursing care and family care for severe stroke patients

劉玉華
Lian Chiu; Woei Cheng Shyu; Yu Hua Liu

Abstract
AIM: This study compared the cost and effectiveness of long-term institutional care and home care for stroke patients with severe physical disabilities. BACKGROUND: Whether home care is more economical or effective than institutional care for patients with chronic illnesses remains controversial when the cost of family labour is considered. Thus, decisions concerning the appropriate type of care setting for patients with severe chronic illness remain difficult. METHODS: From November 1995 to March 1996, 313 hospitalized stroke patients with severe physical disabilities treated at one of five hospitals in the Taipei metropolitan area were followed from the day of hospital discharge until the third month after discharge. These 313 patients were divided into four groups as follows: (1) 106 who were admitted to a chronic care unit in a hospital, (2) 60 who were admitted to nursing homes, (3) 60 who received professional home nursing care and (4) 87 who returned home without receiving professional care. The change of physical functional status in the patient was examined as the difference between activities of daily living (ADL) scores measured at discharge and at the end of the third month after discharge. RESULTS: Information on family costs for caregiving, including pay for long-term services utilized, labour costs for caregiving and out-of-pocket expenditures for miscellaneous materials was obtained during a weekly telephone interview. The results indicated that caring for patients in their own homes was not only more expensive but was also less effective in improving ADL scores than caring for patients in nursing homes and in chronic care units of hospitals. CONCLUSIONS: The results suggest that caring for patients with severe physical disabilities in institutions is more appropriate than caring of them at home.