

Abstract

Background

The fragmentation of healthcare systems often results in inadequate care continuity for persons with multimorbidity. Frail older adults are particularly susceptible to suboptimal care during transitions between care settings. These vulnerabilities necessitate specialized geriatric transitional care to reduce hospital readmission and premature institutionalization rates. Transitional care models, which have demonstrated potential in improving health-related quality of life and reducing rehospitalizations, need to be effectively implemented.

Design

The AdvantAGE project, grounded in implementation science methodology, aims to develop, implement, and evaluate an innovative transitional care model at the University Department of Geriatric Medicine FELIX PLATTER (UAFP). The project uses a participatory approach involving diverse stakeholders and is structured in two phases. The first phase (2021-2023) focuses on developing the model's core elements and implementation strategies. The second phase encompasses an effectiveness-implementation hybrid trial to evaluate the newly developed model and its implementation process.

Setting & Participants

The AdvantAGE project is implemented at the UAFP in Basel, Switzerland and will involve frail older adults transitioning from hospital to community settings, as well as relevant healthcare staff.

Methods and Materials

The evaluation of the primary outcome, the 90-day rehospitalization rate, will utilize a retrospective matched-control cohort study. Secondary outcomes, such as changes in patients' health-related quality of life and the cost-effectiveness of the AdvantAGE model, will also be evaluated. Qualitative data collected from individual and focus group interviews will provide insights into implementation outcomes, potential barriers, and facilitators to the implementation. In addition, a process evaluation will offer an in-depth understanding of individual intervention effects and reasons for rehospitalization.

Expected Outcomes and Impact

The AdvantAGE project aims to significantly improve outcomes for frail older adults, potentially reshaping transitional care within the Canton of Basel-Stadt. The results are expected to provide essential recommendations for scaling up the model to other settings, aligning with the Swiss Federal Council's health policy strategy to promote coordinated care.