

Original article:

Rice JL, Matlack KM, Simmons MD, et al. LEAP: A randomized-controlled trial of a lay-educator inpatient asthma education program. *Patient Educ Couns*. 2015 Jun 29. pii: S0738-3991(15)30006-9

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Numerous models for asthma education have been developed. A novel program termed *LEAP* (Lay-Educators for Asthma Program) was created in 2009 with the goal of using lay asthma educators to provide asthma teaching in the inpatient setting. These volunteer asthma educators were recruited from local universities and included nursing and pre-med students. The volunteers completed two 4-hour training sessions presented by a certified health educator. Subsequently, they provided individualized asthma education based on NAEPP guidelines to children (and their families) ages 2-17 who were admitted for asthma, asthma exacerbation, status asthmaticus or reactive airway disease.

In this study, 711 patients were enrolled and were randomized to receive standard medical management (which included an asthma care plan) or standard management combined with a 30-60 minute asthma teaching session led by a volunteer asthma educator. Questionnaires were completed at enrollment in the hospital and via a phone call to a parent/caregiver one month later. At discharge from the hospital, all subjects were scheduled for a 7-10 day follow-up in an asthma clinic. Follow-up in this clinic was low in both groups. At the end of the study, one hundred and forty seven subjects were lost to follow-up.

The study found that subjects participating in the asthma teaching sessions were more likely to report use of a controller therapy (OR 2.4, $p < 0.01$), use a valved-holding spacer (OR 2.9, $p = 0.03$) and have an asthma action plan (OR 2, $p < 0.01$). Limitations of the study include high dropout rate, short time frame of follow-up and reliance on parents/caregivers to complete the follow-up questionnaires.

Although numerous studies have demonstrated the benefits of asthma education, time and financial constraints can be a challenge. However, this novel approach used lay volunteers to deliver quality inpatient asthma education which may provide an effective, sustainable way to offer this much needed service.