A rapid synthesis of the evidence on interventions supporting self-management for people with long-term conditions: PRISMS – Practical systematic Review of Self-Management Support for long-term conditions

Stephanie JC Taylor,¹* Hilary Pinnock,² Eleni Epiphaniou,¹ Gemma Pearce,¹ Hannah L Parke,¹ Anna Schwappach,¹ Neetha Purushotham,¹ Sadhana Jacob,¹ Chris J Griffiths,¹ Trisha Greenhalgh¹ and Aziz Sheikh²

¹Centre for Primary Care and Public Health, Blizard Institute, Queen Mary University of London, London, UK
²Centre for Population Health Science, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, UK

*Corresponding author

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Plain English summary

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Plain English summary

Everyone who has a long-term condition (LTC), such as arthritis or asthma, has to deal with (or ‘self-manage’) their condition, sometimes with the help of a spouse, friends or a carer. In addition to physical symptoms, LTCs often have social and emotional effects on people.

We were commissioned to look at what can be done to support self-management across a wide range of LTCs and to make suggestions to those providing health services. We did this by systematically summarising the research that has been done in the area.

We concluded that supporting good self-management is inseparable from the high-quality care all people with LTCs should receive. Supporting self-management is not a substitute for care from doctors and nurses but a hallmark of good care. Providers of services for people with LTCs should consider how they can actively support self-management.

Effective self-management support usually has many components, should be flexible, tailored to the individual and their LTC, and be underpinned by good collaboration between the patient and a trusted health-care professional, all within a health-care organisation that actively promotes self-management.

Although many different ways to support self-management have been tested no one stood out as more important than any other. Key activities include (1) provision of knowledge and information about the LTC; (2) psychological strategies to support people adjusting to life with a LTC; (3) practical support for physical care tailored to the specific LTC; (4) action plans for LTCs that may deteriorate; and (5) social support as appropriate.

Other potentially effective components include self-monitoring with feedback and practical support with adherence strategies.
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This report

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