Abstract

Background Persons with an intellectual and developmental disability (I/DD) frequently face barriers to access preventive services in community-based health care systems, and as they age into middle years, they are at increased risk for functional decline. This paper presents a description of an advanced practice nurse (APN) intervention used in a pilot study that explored the feasibility of using an in-home preventive model based on a comprehensive geriatric assessment with persons aging with an I/DD.

Method The APN intervention was fully provided to a sub-sample (n = 70) of 201 participants with an I/DD enrolled in a program called Stay Well and Healthy! The APN intervention included an initial home visit for a comprehensive geriatric assessment with follow-up home visits to review health status and assess adherence with recommendations and provide education and support to promote health and prevent functional decline.

Results APNs identified a number of active health-related problems for persons aging with an I/DD (mean 5.2; range 1-14) that had potential effects on function and survival. The majority of recommendations (Mean = 14.4; range 6-35) were for clinical preventive services (42.2%) and self-care for health-related issues (36.8%).

Conclusions This study showed there were problems consistent with persons aging with an I/DD and older adults without disability. The in-home preventive APN intervention to promote healthy aging and reduce health disparities in this population is feasible, needed, and warrants further study.