

Lay-led self-management education programmes can be effective

Clinical question	How effective are lay-led self-management education programmes for people with chronic health problems?
Bottom line	Lay-led self-management programmes may lead to small, short-term improvements in participants' self-efficacy, self-rated health, cognitive symptom management, and frequency of aerobic exercise. No adverse events, such as complaints, were reported in any of the studies. Chronic conditions included arthritis, diabetes, hypertension and chronic pain.
Caveat	The programmes did not alter quality of life, number of visits to doctors, or reduce the amount of time spent in hospital. While many of the programmes were similar, they differed in which conditions were studied, which outcomes were measured and effectiveness of the programmes. Follow-up was limited to 6 months or less in most of the studies.
Context	Self-management education programmes led by lay-leaders (rather than health professionals such as doctors or nurses) are becoming a common way to promote self-care for people with chronic conditions.
Cochrane Systematic Review	Foster G et al. Self-management education programmes by lay leaders for people with chronic conditions. Cochrane Reviews 2007, Issue 4. Art No: CD005108. DOI: 10.1002/14651858. CD005108.pub 2. This review contains 17 trials involving 7,442 participants.
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