Lower Risks of Death and On Treatment Hospitalization in DaVita Rx Members Versus Matched Controls

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Introduction
- DaVita Rx is a full-service pharmacy that specializes in kidney care.
- Medication prescriptions are filled at 3 pharmacies and typically dispensed on the same day.
- In a recent study, receiving integrated pharmacy services from DaVita Rx was associated with lower rates of death and fewer hospitalized days among dialysis patients from 2006 to 2008.
- That study was limited in several ways:
  - Only in-center hemodialysis patients were included.
  - Only patients concurrently enrolled in Medicare and Medicaid were included.
  - Analyses were not adjusted for blood pressure at baseline.
  - We aimed to replicate these associations in a broader, more contemporary cohort:
    - New DaVita Rx members from 2007 to December 31, 2010.
    - All dialytic modalities.
    - All patients enrolled in Medicare Parts A, B, and D, regardless of concurrent Medicaid enrollment.
    - We also aimed to improve control of baseline infection risk, as we previously reported that DaVita Rx members had an unexpectedly lower rate of infection-related hospitalization.

Methods
- DaVita records and United States Renal Data System (USRDS) records were linked.
- The exposed cohort comprised new DaVita Rx members (first medication filled on a DaVita Rx pharmacy) between January 1, 2007, and December 31, 2010.
- All members had Medicare Parts A, B, and D coverage for ≥3 months before the date of new DaVita Rx enrollment.
- For each member, we identified 3 matched controls:
  - From within-state DaVita dialysis facilities, according to an 81 factor propensity score of new DaVita Rx enrollment.
  - Candidate controls were identified on the corresponding member’s date of new DaVita Rx enrollment.
- To optimize match quality, controls were sampled with replacement.
- We followed patients until December 31, 2010, with Intention-to-treat (ITT) and On-treatment (OT) rules.
  - By the OT approach, follow-up was censored after 3 consecutive calendar months without medication filled by DaVita Rx pharmacies.
  - We ascertained the incidence of death and hospitalization from USRDS records.
  - Causes of hospitalization were identified from primary discharge diagnoses on Medicare Part A inpatient facility claims.

Results
- We identified 19,354 new DaVita Rx members and 58,045 matched controls.
- The groups were balanced according to all measured baseline factors.
- At 1 year, the ITT cumulative incidence of death was 10.5% vs. 10.9% for DaVita Rx members vs. matched controls.
  - Overall hazard ratio (HR): 0.94; 95% confidence interval (CI): 0.90-0.98.
- At 1 year, the OT cumulative incidence of death was 8.0% vs. 10.9% for DaVita Rx members vs. matched controls.
  - Overall HR: 0.82; 95% CI: 0.77-0.87.
  - By the ITT (OT) approach, hospitalization rates in DaVita Rx members were 1.70 (1.63) admissions and 10.12 (9.29) cumulative days per patient-year.
  - ITT relative rates (RRs) and 95% CIs of hospitalization for DaVita Rx members vs. matched controls were:
    - 0.98 (0.96-1.00) for admissions.
    - 0.96 (0.94-0.99) for cumulative days.
  - OT RRs of hospitalization for DaVita Rx members vs. matched controls were:
    - 0.94 (0.92-0.96) for admissions.
    - 0.90 (0.87-0.92) for cumulative days.
  - By the OT approach, cumulative days were significantly less in DaVita Rx members for primary diagnoses of heart failure, hypertensive disease, peripheral arterial disease, and bacteremia/sepsis.
  - Changes in DaVita Rx enrollment status were common.

Conclusions
- Receiving integrated pharmacy services from DaVita Rx was associated with significantly lower risk of death, regardless of follow-up approach.
- DaVita Rx members had lower rates of hospitalization in on-treatment analysis.
- Substantial dis-enrollment from DaVita Rx likely contributed to weaker associations of membership with hospitalization in intention-to-treat follow-up.
- That DaVita Rx members had lower rates of cumulative days in hospital for most types of cardiovascular morbidity may suggest improved utilization of cardiovascular medications.
- The strong association of DaVita Rx membership with bacteremia/sepsis is enigmatic, but might reflect improved utilization of cardiovascular medications, resulting in improved patency of vascular access devices (and less exposure time to catheters).
- Further investigation of this possible mechanism is warranted.
- All observational studies are subject to unmeasured confounding.
- In this study, results from OT analyses may partially reflect the influence of informative censoring, whereby less vs. more adherent patients are relatively likely to dis-enroll from DaVita Rx.