
Telehealth Interventions to Improve Outcomes in Lung Transplant Recipients: Primary Results of the INSPIRE III Randomized Clinical Trial

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Why We Did This Study

Some people who receive a lung transplant may experience stress afterwards despite improvements with physical quality of life. Few studies have tested ways to help them. Researchers wanted to know if a phone-based program combining coping skills and exercise could reduce stress and improve physical fitness in lung transplant recipients compared to an education group.

Who Participated in This Study?

180 adults who had received a lung transplant took part. They enrolled between November 2019 and October 2023 at Duke University. The average age was 60 years. About 60% were men and 82% were White. All participants had completed pulmonary rehabilitation after their transplant and were medically stable at enrollment.

What Were the Results?

Both groups were similar at baseline with generally low levels of distress and were already physically active. Small improvements in emotional distress and physical fitness were seen after 12 weeks, and the two programs performed similarly overall. Among a small group of participants who were depressed at the start, those in the coping skills and exercise group had much greater reductions in depression — about 10 points versus 2.5 points for the education group. Physical activity levels did not meaningfully change for either group.

What Do These Results Mean?

Most lung transplant recipients cope well after surgery. Most also reported low levels of distress and were already physically active. Participating in a post-transplant program which focuses either on coping skills or post-transplant education may result in, or help maintain, similar high quality of physical function and mental well-being after transplant. Longer studies are needed to see if these gains also improve long-term health outcomes.
