

Feasibility of identifying and engaging care partners for outreach interventions using electronic health record data



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BACKGROUND

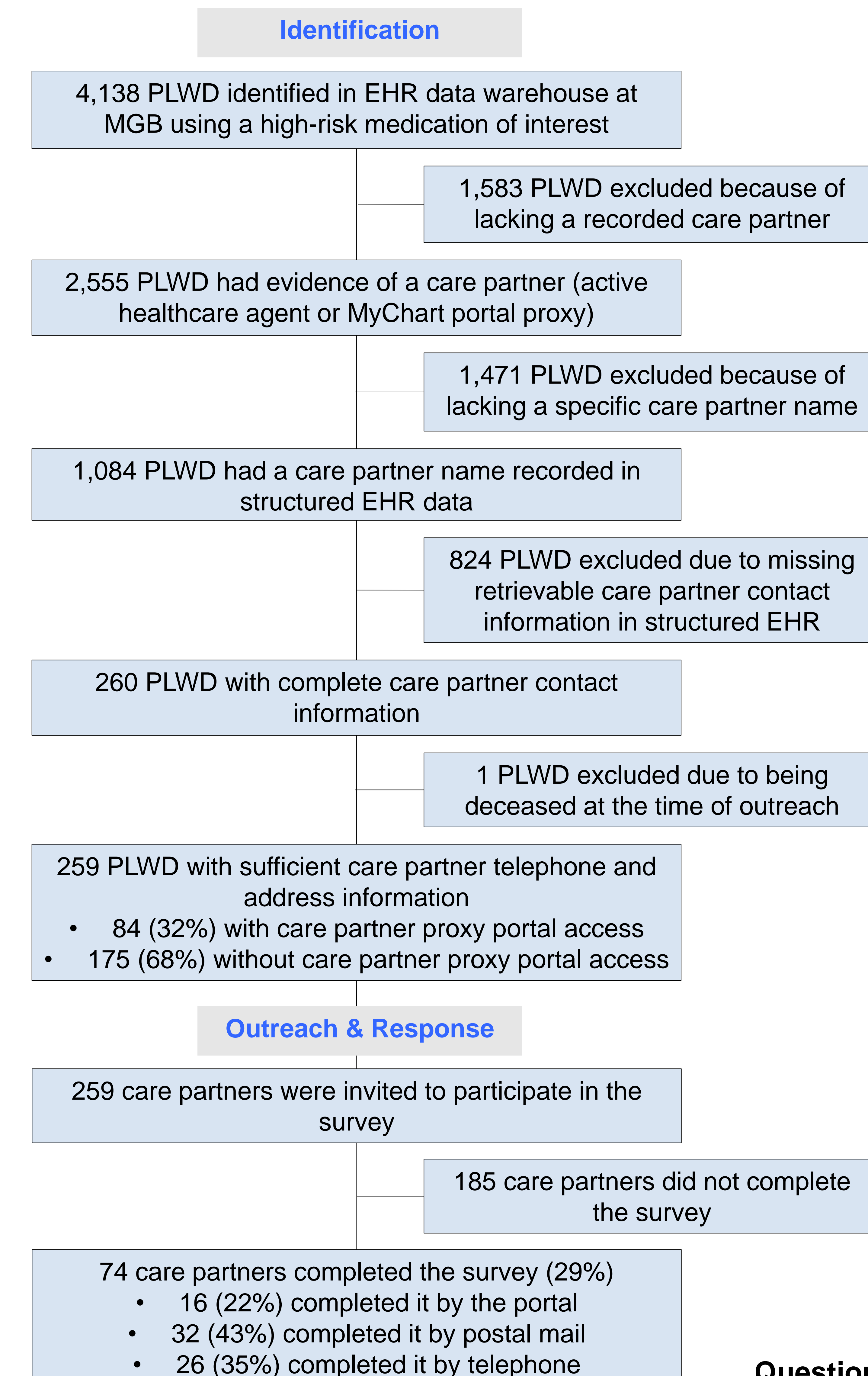
- Care partners play a critical role for persons living with dementia (PLWD), especially related to medications.
- Unfortunately, efficiently identifying and engaging care partners within electronic health record (EHR) systems remains a challenge, particularly in a scalable manner for outreach, such as for an intervention tested in an embedded pragmatic trial.
- Objective:** To assess the feasibility of strategies for reaching care partners of PLWD using EHR data.

METHODS

- Population:** Care partners of PLWD ≥65 years of age prescribed a benzodiazepine, sedative hypnotic, and/or antipsychotic medication (high-risk drugs).
- Setting:** Mass General Brigham (Massachusetts)
- Care partner identification:** Using structured EHR data, we identified: how many PLWD had care partners with sufficient mail and telephone contact information and/or had care partners with an official patient portal account set up for electronic outreach about the PLWD (i.e., a “proxy” account).
- Data collection:** To assess strategies for care partner engagement, we sent these care partners a brief caregiving survey in three phases in Fall 2023:
 - 1) by patient portal (if proxy use was established),
 - 2) by postal mail
 - 3) by telephone, twice through the portal and once each through mail and telephone.
- We also measured the reach rates of these care partners, independent of survey completion, by measuring portal read receipts and telephone call answer rates.

RESULTS

Identification and response by care partners of eligible PLWDs using EHR data



Characteristics of care partners who completed the survey (n=74)

Relationship to care recipient, n (%)	
Husband, wife, or partner	57 (77%)
Child	16 (22%)
Friend / Family friend	1 (1.4%)
Gender, n (%)	
Female	46 (62%)
Male	28 (38%)
Primary language at home, n (%)	
English	72 (97%)
Spanish	1 (1.4%)
Other	1 (1.4%)
Ethnicity, n (%)	
Hispanic or Latino/a	2 (2.8%)
Not Hispanic or Latino/a	70 (97%)
Race, n (%)	
Black/African American	1 (1.4%)
American Indian/Alaskan Native	1 (1.4%)
Asian	0 (0%)
White	70 (95%)
Other	2 (2.7%)
Age, mean (SD)	72 (11)
Education, n (%)	
High school graduate or GED	5 (7%)
Some college or 2-year degree	17 (23%)
4-year college graduate	18 (24%)
≥4-year college degree	34 (46%)

Reach rates (independent of survey completion):

- Most care partners with proxy access (n=55/84, 65%) viewed the electronic message itself.
- Most care partners (who had not previously responded) were reachable by telephone (n=123/217, 57%).

SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

- Few PLWD had a care partner with sufficient contact information within structured EHR or portal proxy accounts.
- However, reach rates were high for the minority of care partners who did, indicating it may be a feasible outreach strategy for some interventions, like addressing high-risk medication use, that are leveraging structured EHR data.

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