



MASSACHUSETTS
GENERAL HOSPITAL

Division of General Internal Medicine Healthy Lifestyle Program

Summary Statement

Dr. Jacob Mirsky, MD, MA, DipABLM has developed the Healthy Lifestyle Program with the goal of empowering patients to engage in healthy lifestyle changes by integrating clinical practice, education, research, and community programs.

Background Facts:

Dr. Mirsky co-founded and is the medical director of the Division of General Internal Medicine Healthy Lifestyle Program (HLP) at MGH. This program primarily focuses on Virtual Group Visits, which are run by eleven primary care physicians and nurse practitioners. All patients in Virtual Group Visits also have free access to health and wellness coaches. The HLP serves about 50 patients a month as of February 2022.

In 2019, Dr. Mirsky also founded the MGH Revere Food Pantry. This Food Pantry provides free plant-based foods to patients and their households in order to combat food insecurity and nutrition-related chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, and obesity.

Objective

Dr. Mirsky hopes to establish the practice of healthy lifestyle changes as the standard of care for the prevention and treatment chronic disease.

Program Design

The foundation of this program is Virtual Group Visits (formerly in person but adapted to be virtual during the pandemic) that focus on healthy lifestyle change for chronic disease care. The HLP also incorporates health and wellness coaching, lifestyle videos, virtual exercise classes, and remote monitoring of weight, blood pressure/hypertension, and blood sugar levels. Patients schedule their visits through an EHR, Epic, and are primarily referred in by other providers. In addition, the MGH Revere Food Pantry is currently expanding to include a new teaching kitchen, which will offer virtual experiences for patients related to nutrition and culinary medicine.

MGH Primary Care now offers programs specifically focused on underserved communities to encourage patients to join the HLP through the recommendation of community health workers. To encourage a more diverse patient population to join HLP, most group visits will soon be offered in both Spanish and English. The program accepts all patients regardless of insurance status and all the health and wellness coaching and virtual exercise classes are free. The program aims to be informative and aware of food challenges and exercise opportunities and looks to meet patients where they are. Dr. Mirsky and his colleagues also look to reduce stress through Mind

Body Medicine, as stress is a major contributor to health outcomes.

As Dr. Mirsky and his team look to grow, their priorities are to scale the hypertension program and then implement a brain care program to reduce strokes and dementia. An assistant medical director for virtual group visits also monitors physicians and reports back to maintain quality control as the program grows more robust.

Program Limitations

Though the program was started in the Revere Clinic, it is now being scaled across MGH Primary Care. Some limitations associated with expanding this model include coordination within a large health system and patient recruitment. To scale and run the program well demands expanding staff to carry out the increased administrative work. The virtual condition of the program requires a lot of technical organization as well, and ensuring patients have access to technology for virtual visits is critical for expansion. As now, patient recruitment and converting patient interest to attendance is becoming more complex as they look to utilize physician referrals and integrate in-person recruitment into their model. Dr. Mirsky and his team are currently launching an educational campaign with hopes that this will inspire more patients to join as they look to implement this program on a larger scale. Administrators are also looking to schedule group visits on nights and weekends to accommodate working patients and offering opportunities in more languages in order to promote equitable opportunities.

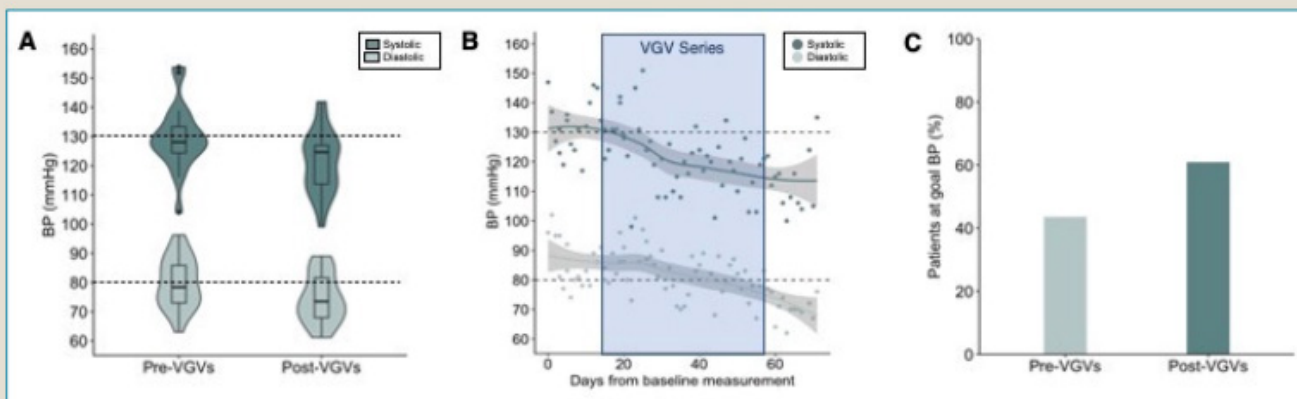
Outcome Measures

Measures of success reflect both health outcome data and process measures. As the program scales, measures will primarily reflect longitudinal clinical outcome data.

Outcome	Description
LMVG volume	Number of patients participating in the program
No-show rates	
Number of providers running group visits	
LMVG patient feedback	Whether the patient:
	Is open to attending more visits, would recommend the program to others
	Felt that the group session was valuable addition to their primary care
	Felt that the group session motivated them to take better care of their health
Home blood pressure monitoring	Patients measure their own blood pressure at home using program-provided cuffs

Summary of Findings

- Patient feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.
- Pre- and post-VGV blood pressure data demonstrated nearly a 50% increase in reaching target blood pressure of $\leq 130/80$ (see figure below).
- De-prescribing was observed in 59% of the patients receiving the VGV intervention.



Mirsky et al. (submitted)

Implications for LM Practice

In terms of lifestyle medicine as a whole, lifestyle medicine virtual group visits are powerful and scalable. Patients love them, providers love them, and they have proven health outcomes that show promise of continuing to improve the lives of participants. As Dr. Mirsky and his team expand these programs to a larger scale, they're finding that, with the right support and staffing, these programs can maintain their integrity as they grow to reach more patients. Funding, sustainability, and financial viability are essential to building

the program. Dr. Mirsky identified a team-based approach, administrative buy-in and support, marketing, and strategy as critical in expanding or recreating his program.

Dr. Mirsky is looking to build a sustainability plan to demonstrate that this program can become financially viable as it grows. As he mentioned, being able to share with hospital leaders that Lifestyle Medicine is both a financially and clinically responsible investment in patient care is a huge selling point as they build initial support.