

Longer hospital stays might reduce readmissions from post-acute care facilities

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More than 25 percent of Medicare beneficiaries who are admitted to the hospital are sent to a post-acute care facility (a health facility like a rehabilitation or skilled nursing center used instead of a hospital) after being discharged. However, more than 23 percent of these older adults face readmission to the hospital within 30 days, and often within the first week.

Researchers examined data from a study that included 81,173 [older adults](#) who experienced [hospital](#) readmissions from post-acute care facilities. Their study was published in the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*.

The researchers studied information from people 65-years-old and older who were readmitted from post-acute care facilities for any cause within 7 days after being discharged from the hospital. Then, the researchers compared their findings to data from older adults who were readmitted between 8 and 30 days after their hospital discharge.

The researchers discovered that older adults who are readmitted to hospitals within one week tend to have a heavier burden of chronic disease than people who aren't readmitted as quickly.

They also learned that a shorter original stay in the hospital is linked to earlier readmission to the hospital. Other factors that influence a quicker readmission to the hospital include living in a rural area, having been originally admitted for a heart attack or pneumonia, and having been

discharged from smaller hospitals.

According to the researchers, these findings support the theory that older people may be discharged "quicker and sicker." They suggested that people whose initial hospital stays were shorter could have either been sicker when they were discharged or had insufficient time in the hospital to recover fully.

The researchers suggested that hospital strategies that ensure older adults are healthy enough for discharge could help prevent early hospital readmissions from post-acute care facilities. Good communication between you and your healthcare providers may be a great place to start.

More information: Carolyn Horney et al, Factors Associated With Early Readmission Among Patients Discharged to Post-Acute Care Facilities, *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* (2017). [DOI: 10.1111/jgs.14758](https://doi.org/10.1111/jgs.14758)

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