CONFERENCE ABSTRACT

Innovative approaches to outcome measurement in EU-funded research projects on integrated care for people with complex needs

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Background: Numerous integrated care initiatives for people with complex needs have been rolled out, in different settings and contexts. There is a widely held belief that integrated care will improve quality of care and health outcomes. Despite many studies evaluating the effectiveness of integrated care programs, evidence remains inconsistent. A potential explanation could be that studies did not use appropriate outcome measures for people with complex needs, such as frail older people and people with multimorbidity. Studies often cover general health outcomes (e.g., health status, physical functioning, quality of life), whereas outcomes such as wellbeing, social functioning, social participation and goal attainment might be more appropriate for vulnerable target groups. Additionally, evaluations in integrated care often merely focus on quantitative outcomes, whereas mixed methods approaches, taking into account the contexts in which these programs are implemented, might be more appropriate in evaluating complex interventions such as integrated care. Currently, different EU-funded research initiatives are taking place that take innovative approaches to measure the outcomes of integrated care practices for vulnerable populations with complex needs. In all projects, (improvements to) existing integrated care initiatives are being evaluated, but they do so in different ways, using different instruments and indicators. These projects include: 1. Sustainable Tailored Integrated Care for Older People in Europe (SUSTAIN, www.sustain-eu.org); 2. Sustainable Integrated Care Models for Multi-Morbidity: Delivery, Financing and Performance (SELFIE, http://www.selfie2020.eu/) and 3. Advancing Care Coordination and Telehealth deployment at Scale (ACT@Scale, https://www.act-at-scale.eu).

Aims & objectives: During this session, we will first present the innovative approaches to measuring outcomes that we take in the different projects and how we aim to tackle some of the common challenges in outcome measurement. We will further discuss the importance and value of regular exchange between the three EU projects in order to harmonise outcome
measurement and as such facilitate cross-country comparisons. Finally, we will address common lessons learned: what does and does not work in evaluating integrated care?

**Format**: In this interactive session, representatives of each project will explain their approaches to outcome measurement, the instruments and indicators they use, and lessons learned. After that, discussion with the audience will focus on the following topics: 1. Which outcome measures are most relevant to evaluate health and wellbeing, patient experiences and costs? 2. Do we use appropriate indicators and instruments to measure outcomes in people with complex needs? 3. Which practical issues should be taken into account when collecting data in vulnerable populations? 4. What challenges are to be expected when harmonising outcome measurement across and within countries? 5. How can lessons learned from these projects collectively bring evaluation of integrated care practices forward?

**Target audience**: This workshop is targeted at researchers and decision-makers who want to know more about evaluating integrated care initiatives.

**Learnings**: After this session, participants will have: 1. insight in innovative approaches of outcome measurement in different EU-funded projects, 2. learned about successes and challenges experienced in these projects, and 3. insight in how combining experiences from different projects can bring research further.

**Keywords**: evaluation; indicators; innovative approaches; outcome measurement; vulnerable populations