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Conference Abstract

National Survey Integrated Primary Care

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Abstract:

Introduction: Primary care is highly valued in commentaries on health care systems [1,2]. However, its surplus value has only been demonstrated on a highly abstract level (comparing health care systems as a whole) or on a local level for single, isolated aspect of primary care (e.g. the relationship between multidisciplinary cooperation and hospital referrals).

It is thought that the surplus value of primary care can best be realized by an integrated care approach [3]. Elements of this approach (at the level of funding, organization, administration, service delivery and clinical cooperation) are assumed to be related to a more cost-effective health care with comparable quality of care. Empirical evidence for such relationships is scarce up till now. In this contribution we present the design of a large scale survey, to be carried out in the Netherlands the forthcoming years. In this survey, we will analyze several aspects of integrated care and their contribution to cost-effectiveness controlling for case mix.

Method: Specifically for this survey, a new instrument will be developed for the assessment of the degree of integrated care provided by primary care practices. This instrument will cover a number of dimensions of integrated care, mentioned above.

A large number of practices (we aim at 320) will be approached to participate in this study. The integrated care instrument will be assessed for all these practices.

As most of the invited practices participate in existing networks of health care registrations of general practitioners, it is possible to collect data on quality of care indicators for these practices in an automated way. In cooperation with the Dutch Insurers organization we will collect data on the integrated health care costs of participating practices. In addition, we will collect data on patients' health status, socio-demographic characteristics and evaluation of the practice by a questionnaire, to be administered to random samples from participating practices

Results: We expect information on the following topics:

the degree in which distinguished dimension of integrated care are realized in the Netherlands
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the relationship between this degree of integration and costs generated by these practices
the relationship between this degree of integration and quality of care
the relationship between this degree of integration and cost-effectivity

Keywords

integrated care, national survey, primary care

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