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Conference Abstract

Organisational integration: Challenges, models and mechanisms to facilitate integrated care

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Abstract

Purpose: Many organisations have been established to facilitate linkages between local health service providers. These organisations operate at a level between governments that develop policies underpinning the health system and agencies that provide services directly to patients. Different models have been developed to facilitate integration across primary care organisations. This review aimed to identify challenges to integration, and mechanisms that can be applied to successful models of integrated primary care.

Methods: A literature review was undertaken using a range of electronic databases and websites.

Findings: Within Australian and international models of organisational integration, challenges were identified around: communication, organisational culture, system and structural arrangements, information technology and resources, and funding arrangements. The research also identified mechanisms that influence integration, including: governance, regulation, sustainability, partnerships, engagement and communication, data and evidence, eHealth, infrastructure and financing. These mechanisms and the way they can be applied in future models and organisations will be discussed.

Discussion: The siloed structures of the past can present difficult barriers to establishing and maintaining effective inter-organisational relationships. However, with good planning, strong leadership, adequate resources and realistic shared objectives, organisational integration can contribute to improved integration of health services and continuity of care for consumers.

Keywords:

integrated care, primary health care, organisations, models, mechanisms

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