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Conference Abstract

What is care coordination about: towards a theoretical framework for the study of care coordination

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Abstract

Purpose: Strategies to improve care coordination between primary and hospital care do not always have the desired result partly due to incomplete understanding of key concepts of care coordination. The aim of this study is to explore key concepts of care coordination and the relationships between them.

Methods: We performed an in-depth analysis of existing theoretical frameworks, interviewed twenty-two patients and organised six focus groups with healthcare professionals.

Findings: Fourteen key concepts were identified in existing theoretical frameworks. Two new concepts revealed in patient perceived care coordination. Preliminary results confirm the 16 previously identified key concepts in healthcare professionals perceived care coordination. Core key concept of care coordination include defining and knowing each other “roles”, the “quality of relationships” promoting mutual respect and collaboration, “information exchange” between healthcare professionals and defining and sharing common “goals”. These core key concepts are influenced by “external factors”, “task characteristics”, “cultural factors”, “knowledge and technology”, “need for coordination”, “administrative operational processes” and “patient characteristics” leading to a certain outcome.

Discussion: It is important to improve “roles”, “quality of relationships” between healthcare professionals and with the patient, “information exchange” and “goals” to ensure care coordination between primary and hospital care certainly when unexpected events occur.

Keywords:

coordination, primary health care, hospitals, theoretical models, qualitative research

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