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Conference Abstract

Organisational level enablers for integrated primary health care

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Abstract

Introduction: While integrated care is often viewed in terms of health service delivery, there is a growing number of organisations and agencies that have a role to play, including primary health care organisations, hospitals, allied health providers, medical specialists, non-health organisations and research organisations. These parties operate at the meso level between policy (macro) and service delivery (micro) and are critical to facilitating integration between diverse practitioners and improving the patient's journey through the health system.

Aims: To identify the organisational level enablers that support integration in primary health care.

Method: Pragmatic literature review to identify initiatives and enablers relevant to integration in primary health care.

Results: The key enablers identified in the literature for meso level integration fell into five main categories: communication; organisational culture; system and structural arrangements; information technology and resources; and funding arrangements. In some areas of Australia, particularly in rural and remote regions, there are few services available to integrate and alternative strategies are needed to bring patients to services or vice versa.

Conclusion: In Australia, meso level integration has largely relied on good will, incentives, and formal (e.g., memoranda of understanding) or informal agreements or partnerships. This has resulted in local innovation, which is often variable across regions. Success is highly dependent on strong leadership, common objectives and clarity of roles, responsibilities and accountabilities.

Keywords

Australia, primary health care, organisational culture, partnership
