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Conference Abstract

Equality in partnerships. The Coordination Reform in Norway

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Abstract

Introduction: Norway introduced mandatory service agreements in 2012, as a reform instrument to strengthen partnerships between municipal care and hospitals. From the perspective of municipal care, lack of equality in these partnerships was prior to the reform perceived as an obstacle to collaboration. The study explores whether Norwegian municipalities perceive equality in these partnerships and improvement in collaboration, approximately 2 years after the reform was implemented.

Theory/methods: Since we did not find any instrument to measure equality in partnerships, an explorative design was chosen. The development of the instrument was based on the theory on partnership and knowledge about the field and context. Then a national online survey was emitted to all 429 Norwegian municipals in 2013. The response rate was in total 58 percent (n=248). Mainly principal component analysis, ANOVA and descriptive methods have been applied.

Results: It seems that the two dimensions "learning and expertise equality" and "contractual equality" collects reliable and valid data to measure aspects of equality in partnerships. Norwegian municipalities perceive equality in relation to hospitals on these dimensions. Some improvement of collaboration outcomes was found.

Discussion: Partnerships are usually based on voluntarism. The results indicate that statutory partnerships, within a public health care system, can be appropriate to equalize partnerships and improve collaboration between health care providers at different care levels.

Keywords

equality; partnership; municipal care; collaboration; service agreements

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