

Conference abstract

## **Integrating research into the inter-organisational relationship: towards a theoretically-rooted tool for evaluation**

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### **Abstract**

**Purpose:** To enable an understanding of the complexities involved in evaluating and improving the partnerships between organisations involved in integrated working.

**Theory:** Network organisations provide a unique challenge to understanding and evaluating the processes and mechanisms through which organisations integrate. Through integrating research into this interface we propose a methodology for evaluation.

**Methods:** A Grounded Theory study of partnership working in network organisations, with data analysis to build a theoretical model of the way that partnership works in complex organisational situations.

**Results and conclusions:** Integrating care involves working across multiple organisations, creating complex environments for assessment and evaluation. We show that what happens in the ‘spaces’ between organisations involved in complex partnership arrangements is crucial and that current methods of partnership evaluation are inadequate for complex partnership situations, such as network organisations. Our model for integrating research into these interfaces between organisations involved in care enables these complexities to be better understood with the potential for real improvements in complex integrated care situations. In order to achieve this it is important that a theoretically-rooted, context-specific evaluative tool can be developed. This paper presents the Model of Network Partnership which the authors believe is a crucial stage in the process of development of such a tool with the potential to promote genuine improvements in integrated working.

### **Keywords**

**partnership working, network organisations, integrating research, grounded theory**

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