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Conference Abstract

Is Europe putting theory into practice? A study of the level of Self-Management Support in coordinated care approaches for chronically ill

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Abstract

Objectives: This study explores whether and how self-management support (SMS), a key element of well-coordinated chronic care, is integrated into existing chronic care approaches in 13 European countries [1].

Methodology: An expert review was conducted using a data template informed by the Chronic Care Model [2]. Key informants (researchers and policymakers) from the 13 countries presented a sample of exemplary chronic care approaches and related SMS strategies. This was complemented by interviews with 27 Dutch care professionals investigating SMS implementation in practice.

Results: SMS remains relatively underdeveloped in Europe. Country-specific strategies are similar in involved providers (nurses) and settings (primary care), yet differ considerably in mode, format and materials used. SMS focuses mainly on patients medical and behavioral management, and less on emotional management. According to Dutch providers, barriers in financing and medical culture (e.g. length of consultation, patient-doctor communication) hamper implementation of SMS as an integral part of chronic care.

Conclusion: While Europe might increasingly be talking the talk of patient participation in chronic care, it appears far from walking the walk. Care professionals experience difficulties in operationalizing SMS in their daily routines. Stronger integration with the health promotion field may help patients and professionals to engage in productive partnerships.

Keywords:

chronic care; self-management support; Europe; expert review; barriers to implementation

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