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Poster Abstract

How does perceived informational and managerial continuity affect quality of care? Patients' opinions on the Catalan public health services

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Abstract

Introduction: Continuity of care – the patient's experience of connected and coherent care consistent with his or her health needs and personal circumstances [1] – is essential for achieving high-quality care and should further improve health outcomes.

Objective: To explore the patient's perception of consequences of informational and managerial continuity in three different healthcare areas (regarding the number of health providers, type of ownership and location) of the National Health Service in Catalonia, Spain.

Methods: A descriptive, qualitative study on continuity of care across the primary and secondary care level with a phenomenological approach was conducted, employing semi-structured interviews with a purposeful sample of patients (49) who had been seen by their primary and secondary care physician three months prior the data collection for the same health problem. A thematic content analysis was carried out, segmented by study area and triangulated by three researchers.

Results: Preliminary data analysis suggest that informants generally consider that clinical information is shared and used across care levels (informational continuity); compensating for experienced inconsistency of personnel. Main perceived consequences of existent informational continuity are twofold: receiving adequate care along the continuum (from accurate diagnosis to appropriate referrals to the right care level, immediate onset of an adequate treatment adapted to other physicians' instructions and regular follow-up care), and facilitating the patient role (no need to repeat antecedents, explain the reason for the referral or storing paper-based medical reports). Perceived deficiencies in receiving coherent care in the right care level and adapted to the patient's health needs in all care levels (managerial continuity) are linked to a waste of time and resources for the individual patient and the health system as a whole, to a delayed or no resolution of their health problem and the patient seeking private care.

Conclusion: Patients identified a series of consequences of informational and managerial continuity in all study areas that might affect, positively or negatively, clinical and service quality of care as well as health outcomes.

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Keywords

integrated delivery of health care, continuity of patient care, health information systems, qualitative research, Spain

References

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Powerpoint presentation:

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