

Collaboration Among Multidisciplinary Medical Teams: Strategies and Challenges of Building Collaborative Teams to Improve Health Care

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ABSTRACT

Healthcare systems face many challenges, such as increasing population and the spread of chronic and infectious diseases, which hinder their ability to deliver healthcare services effectively. Recent technological advances may contribute to improving healthcare but may also pose new challenges to healthcare systems. Physicians often treat diseases individually, which limits the ability of the medical team to diagnose the disease and develop a comprehensive treatment plan. Complex and multi-morbid conditions require effective collaboration between physicians from different medical specialties as well as technicians and other healthcare workers. This review focuses on the importance of collaboration between medical specialties and multidisciplinary teams in improving healthcare outcomes, enhancing patient experience, and enhancing communication between different medical parties. Through collaborative care models, coordination between specialist physicians and healthcare workers can be improved to ensure comprehensive and coordinated patient care, leading to improved patient prognosis, reduced costs, and increased patient satisfaction. Despite the significant benefits of this collaboration, there are challenges including team member selection, communication, and conflicts within teams, which may hinder the achievement of the expected benefits. Therefore, this study focuses on strategies to overcome these challenges to achieve effective collaboration between medical teams.

Keywords: Multidisciplinary medical teams, collaborative care, healthcare, technology in healthcare.

Introduction

Health systems face many challenges that hinder the process of providing health care services to communities and patients, as they suffer from the spread of infectious diseases, chronic diseases, and an increasing population [1]. Moreover, modern technological developments impose many challenges on health care systems despite the benefits and positives they have achieved in the development of health care [2].

Diseases are usually dealt with individually by doctors and health care professionals, which limits the ability to diagnose the disease and develop a treatment plan. Moreover, the majority of patients suffer from multiple and complex diseases, which requires a collaborative approach between doctors in different specialties and all other medical professions [3].

Effective cooperation, communication, and coordination between doctors from different specialties, health professionals, and technicians are essential in health care and the ability to perform accurate diagnostic procedures, develop treatment plans, and follow up on multiple and complex disease cases and patients with chronic diseases, as these patients require cooperation between different care providers to ensure that they receive comprehensive and integrated care [4,5]. These cases are characterized by multiple medical, social, and behavioral factors, which makes coordination between specialized doctors in various fields an urgent necessity [6]. In the absence of shared information systems, this can lead to fragmentation of information and lack of full awareness of the patient's condition, increasing the risk of fragmented care. Therefore, improving collaboration between general practitioners and specialists is a crucial step in addressing these challenges, as it allows the general practitioner to have a comprehensive view of the patient's condition while the specialist provides deep expertise in the specific medical field [7,8].

The literature indicates that collaboration between physicians, health professionals and technicians is concentrated in multidisciplinary teams, which leads to reducing their professional burden, improving the quality of health care provided to the community and patients, reducing the rates of hospital readmissions, and shortening the length of stay [9,10]. On the other hand, collaboration between physicians from the same specialties is less studied in the literature, as physicians are often viewed as a unified group despite their diverse specialties. However, collaboration between physicians in providing patient care, which includes information exchange and co-decision making, can have a significant impact on health care outcomes [11].

Therefore, this review seeks to focus on the importance of effective collaboration between different medical specialties, professions and technicians, and to demonstrate the importance of multidisciplinary teams in providing comprehensive health care to the community and improving patient outcomes and experience.

Collaboration and integration in care: Collaborative care models

In healthcare, interdisciplinary collaboration leads to improved patient outcomes, increased patient satisfaction, and more efficient healthcare delivery. It promotes a comprehensive approach to care, where professionals from different disciplines

contribute their expertise to meet the complex needs of patients. This skill also helps identify and resolve potential conflicts or misunderstandings between professionals, leading to improved teamwork and collaboration [12].

Collaborative care models are defined as systems that integrate healthcare services that include physicians, health professionals, and technicians from different disciplines to meet patient needs and improve treatment outcomes. These models include physicians from different disciplines, nurses, mental health professionals, pharmacists, occupational therapists, and physical therapists [13]. Collaborative care models aim to provide synergy between different healthcare providers to provide a more comprehensive, patient-centered approach. This model promotes communication, shared decision-making, and coordinated interventions that aim to improve patient health outcomes and the overall quality of care [14].

Understanding Collaborative Care Models

Understanding collaborative care models is an important aspect of enhancing communication between healthcare teams. In this section, we will delve into the nuances of collaborative care models by incorporating diverse perspectives and insights.

Shared decision-making: Collaborative care models emphasize the importance of involving patients in the decision-making process. By actively involving patients in their healthcare journey, healthcare teams can ensure that treatment plans align with patients' preferences and goals [15].

Interprofessional collaboration: Effective collaborative care models promote teamwork and communication between healthcare professionals from different disciplines. This multidisciplinary approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of patient needs and promotes coordinated care delivery [16].

Care coordination: Collaborative care models prioritize seamless coordination between healthcare providers. By streamlining communication channels and sharing relevant patient information, care teams can avoid duplication of efforts and ensure continuity of care [17].

Technology Integration: Leveraging technology plays a vital role in collaborative care models. Electronic health records, telemedicine platforms, and secure messaging systems facilitate efficient information exchange and enable real-time collaboration among healthcare professionals [18].

Case Management: Collaborative care models often include designated case managers who oversee the coordination of care for patients with complex conditions. These case managers serve as a central point of contact, ensuring that all healthcare providers are on the same page and working toward common goals [19].

Importance of Collaboration

Collaborative care models contribute significantly to improved patient outcomes, as collaborative teams provide more comprehensive, collaborative healthcare by leveraging the diverse and multidisciplinary expertise, knowledge, and skills of

healthcare professionals and healthcare technicians [20]. In general, collaboration between medical teams is particularly important when dealing with complex diseases, infectious diseases, and chronic diseases, where multidisciplinary interventions are critical.

Collaborative care models bring many benefits that improve patient outcomes, including:

Enhanced communication:

Medical team models improve communication between physicians from different specialties, health professionals and technicians, which leads to taking into account all aspects of the patient's condition and thus improving the accuracy of diagnosis, decision-making and developing effective treatment plans that improve patient outcomes [4].

Information sharing:

Collaborative care models share important patient information such as medical history, medical test results, and previous treatments, providing comprehensive, integrated, and timely information that helps inform decisions and treatment plans [21].

Patient satisfaction:

Medical collaboration teams focus on enhancing the patient's physical, psychological and mental health, as well as educating the patient and informing him of treatment plans. This comprehensive approach leads to higher levels of patient satisfaction and engagement [22].

Reduced healthcare costs:

Collaboration between medical teams leads to enhancing clinical and therapeutic decisions for patients, and providing early preventive care for diseases, which leads to reducing the risk of complications and hospitalization and reducing the length of stay in the hospital, which significantly reduces overall healthcare costs [12].

Challenges Facing Multidisciplinary Care Teams

There are many clear benefits to implementing a collaborative care model among multidisciplinary care teams. However, there are several challenges that may hinder the implementation of this team-based model and prevent the realization of the advantages and benefits that these models offer, including:

Poor selection of the disciplines and team members

Multidisciplinary teams rely on the integration of physicians from different specialties and technicians in providing health care to the community and patients. Therefore, the effectiveness of cooperation between these teams depends on the health professionals and their ability to work together and participate in decision-making. Building a collaborative multidisciplinary team should not depend on expertise as much as the need for teamwork spirit [23].

Poor process of team functioning

The work of multidisciplinary teams in healthcare depends mainly on the communication methods between team members, the extent of team members' commitment to the values of sharing authority and building distinctive relationships between health professionals and technicians in the team [12]. Therefore, effective communication methods and clarity of the role and authority of team members must be followed to activate the role of these teams in providing satisfactory health care outcomes for patients and society [23].

Language Barriers

The language differences between health professionals and technicians, the invention of medical terminology and concepts, and abbreviations are some of the major obstacles to building collaborative multidisciplinary teams. It takes time for team members to learn other “languages,” and in some cases, “knowledge brokers” are required to move between team members from different disciplines [24].

Insufficient time

Forming and building multidisciplinary teams may require a longer time frame, due to the inherent differences between team members, working collaboratively, and in a field that is new to them. Developing multidisciplinary requires time and commitment; understanding the language of other disciplines also requires time. Therefore, sufficient time must be allocated to building effective teams [25].

Team conflicts

Team conflicts may develop due to internal or external pressures, individual issues, or organizational problems, such as role ambiguity, increased workload, interpersonal conflict, inadequate communication, and leadership dilemmas. A long-standing team may become self-sufficient or resistant to new ideas [11]. Therefore, clearly defining and communicating the roles and responsibilities of each team member within the overall framework of the new model is essential to alleviate role clarity concerns and enhance the effectiveness of collaborative efforts [4].

Strategies for overcoming challenges

Collaborative care teams face various challenges that can hinder their effectiveness in improving healthcare outcomes. However, several strategies can be implemented to overcome these barriers and constraints, including:

Building trust and relationships

This is done through communication and regular meetings to share information, listen to opinions, and make treatment decisions. Interactive activities such as team-building exercises and joint events strengthen relationships, thus building collaborative multidisciplinary teams that achieve healthcare goals [26].

Leadership development

Effective leadership is critical to the success of collaboration between multidisciplinary medical teams. Leadership can be enhanced by training individuals with leadership capabilities and providing opportunities to develop their skills and enhance collaboration in healthcare delivery [27].

Leveraging technology

Modern digital technologies and artificial intelligence help improve communication and coordination between healthcare teams, share information, and overcome language barriers. Electronic health record (EHR) systems can be used to facilitate information exchange between care providers, while technologies such as telecare and health apps make care more accessible [28].

Policy interventions at the system level

Changes in policies and legislation are essential to support collaborative care. Legislators can introduce payment models that incentivize collaboration and quality-oriented care. In addition, legal and administrative barriers that hinder collaboration can be removed, facilitating teamwork among healthcare professionals [29].

Conclusion:

Collaborative multidisciplinary teams play a vital role in improving the effectiveness of healthcare, especially in light of the challenges facing healthcare systems such as the increase in the number of patients with chronic diseases, the spread of infectious diseases, and others. Collaborative care models enable the medical team to provide comprehensive care that integrates multiple expertise, leading to improved diagnosis and treatment and reduced hospital readmission rates. However, there are several challenges facing multidisciplinary care teams, such as conflicts between teams, language barriers, and time pressure, which may affect the team's ability to work effectively. By adopting effective strategies such as building trust among team members, promoting leadership, and using modern technology, these challenges can be overcome. Overall, health policies should support this collaborative model to stimulate continuous improvement in the quality of healthcare.

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