BILANZ - Accounting dialogues as a means to promote patient-oriented primary care and improve treatment of people with chronic disease

(Study design)

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Challenges of Chronic Care

- Prevalently no set objectives for treatments
- Often inadequately specified underlying risk-resource-profile
- Despite big efforts, treatment does not always meet patients’ needs
- Patients and general practitioners (GPs) are (latently) dissatisfied

→ Systematized negotiation and agreement on objectives, incorporating existing resources is required

From coexistence .... to cooperation

Project goals

- Enhancing the achievement of objectives mutually agreed upon by patients and GPs regarding
  - Prevention of lifestyle-related progression of chronic disease and its outcome
  - Better use of the patient’s coping skills and salutogenic resources
- Demonstrating that an appropriate communication training for GPs and a modified conversation structure (semiannual accounting dialogues) enhance the achievement of objectives
- Promoting patient autonomy by proceeding on a case-by-case basis and in a resource-oriented way

Study design

- Mixed methods design (see figures I and II):
  - Cluster-randomised, controlled and blinded intervention study
  - Qualitative study
- Both completed by health economic evaluation
- Observation period: 1 year for each GP’s surgery
- Intervention I:
  - 24 lessons of intensive training for GPs (cluster level) targeted on accounting dialogues (see Box 4)
  - Identifying salutogenic resources and self-management skills
  - Defining problems, shared decision making and patient-centred communication
- Intervention II:
  - Conducting semiannual accounting dialogues (approx. 20-30 minutes each)
  - Agreeing on assignments and objectives
  - Rechecking the achievement of the set goals
  - Setting new goals, if necessary
- Control group: dialogues focusing on prevention, but no set objectives

GP training concept

- Participant-oriented evaluation of needs and conveying the concept of accounting dialogues
- Simulating feasibility in practice by means of everyday situations from the participants’ surgeries

Considering in addition the following issues regarding the treatment of patients with chronic conditions

- Social situation / gender aspects / salutogenesis and biography
- Conversation skills (accounting dialogue, narration)
- Structuring the long-term relationship between GP and patient (epicritic case reflection)

Eligibility criteria for surgeries and patients

- Research GP surgeries associated with the departments of general medicine at Düsseldorf or Witten University
- Willingness to participate in the training
- Willingness to conduct and keep records on accounting dialogues at two (control group) or three (intervention group) points in time
- Consecutive recruitment of patients suffering from one or more chronic diseases, aged 18 to 70, adequate German language skills in order to answer the survey

Anticipated outcome

- Enhancing the achievement of objectives regarding the treatment of people with chronic disease due to individualised, gender-sensitive supply and promotion of the patient’s own resources
- Modifying the existing daily work in general practice by rendering the content of consultations more structured
- A theory-based and empirically approved module for further medical education, easy to implement in practice, and in a modified form also suitable for academic medical education
- Promoting patient autonomy and GPs’ work satisfaction

Involved researchers:

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