

090: THE BELGIAN DUTCH CLINICAL PATHWAY NETWORK: MULTIDISCIPLINARY AND MULTI CENTER KNOWLEDGE SHARING ON REDESIGNING OF CARE PROCESSES

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Objective:

33 hospitals share work and knowledge on clinical pathways and the redesigning of care processes. The organisation of courses, the multidisciplinary teamwork, the international collaboration and the research on clinical pathways are the main topics of this social capital network.

Methods:

In March 2000 the Center for Health Services and Nursing Research, Catholic University Leuven, Belgium, launched the Belgian-Dutch Clinical Pathway Network (www.nkp.be). This is a joint effort by Belgian and Dutch hospitals to develop, implement and evaluate clinical pathways in the organization of their practice.

The Network is led by a multidisciplinary team from Leuven University which consists of managers, nurses, doctors, economists, psychologists, experts in evidence based medicine (EBM) and experts in information technology.

The Network has three main focuses. The first focus is to provide education on clinical pathways, patient safety, quality control, multidisciplinary teamwork, operations management and EBM.

A second focus is to support multidisciplinary teamwork, in-hospital projects on pathways and multi-center research projects & benchmarking. A third focus of the Network is research and international collaboration.

Results:

Members: In February 2003, 33 hospitals were participating in the Network (52% of the hospital capacity in Flanders). The Network is a fluid mix of framed experience, values, contextual information and expert insight that provides a framework for evaluating and incorporating new experiences and information. The Network has a high social capital.

Education: 40 persons from the Network hospitals followed the "expert course in clinical pathways" which helped them in coordinating and leading the different projects in their organizations. Next to this expert course, we organize every three months an introduction seminar on clinical pathways for healthcare workers. Every six months a seminar on clinical pathways for medical doctors is organized. During these seminars cases on pathway projects are presented by medical doctors.

Multi center research projects: 4 multi center clinical trials were started. Outcome and process indicators were defined, measured and benchmarked for Stroke (17 hospitals), Normal Delivery (20 hospitals), Total Knee Arthroplasty (16 hospitals) and Total Hip Arthroplasty (19 hospitals). Within these multidisciplinary, multi center teams, the benchmarking will guide the different teams towards patient focussed care and improve the multidisciplinary teamwork. Next to the clinical taskforces, taskforces were started on Information Technology, Strategic Management, Finance and Measurement Instruments. In total more than 200 in-hospital projects on clinical pathways are running.

Research: Both Master students and PhD students are performing research within the Network: Developing a Clinical Pathway Audit Tool; Developing specific ICT tools to support clinical pathways; Research on the impact of clinical pathways on operations management; Developing an Activity Based Costing methodology for clinical pathways.

International collaboration: the Network is an international network with hospitals from Belgium and The Netherlands. The Network is collaborating with universities, projects and pathway networks worldwide.

Conclusions:

The Belgian Dutch Clinical Pathway Network creates a win-win relation between the university and the hospitals which leads to joint efforts, multidisciplinary teamwork & discussions and evidence based research that is usable both from an academic point of view and in daily practice.