

Leadership skills in primary care settings can help healthcare workers provide better care to patients involving multiple health professionals, while addressing all the patient's needs

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What is the context of this review?

- Leadership is important in primary care settings as it encourages colleagues to work with one another, and it also allows for patient care to be more coordinated.
- Previous studies have shown that when nurses act as leaders it can lead to patients being more satisfied with their care, it reduced patient deaths, and it led to fewer errors.
- Although there are support programmes that exist to help healthcare professionals develop leadership skills, there are few that address whether leadership is important for integrated care (providing care to a patient for all their health needs, involving the patient, multiple healthcare workers, and the patient's family).
- This review aims to understand whether helping healthcare workers develop leadership skills can also help improve their ability to provide integrated care.

Box 1: Coverage of OHT building blocks

This review addresses [building block #6](#):

- 1) defined patient population
- 2) in-scope services
- 3) patient partnership and community engagement
- 4) patient care and experience
- 5) digital health
- 6) leadership, accountability and governance (domain 47 - proactive provider engagement at all levels)**
- 7) funding and incentive structure
- 8) performance measurement, quality improvement, and continuous learning

What questions are being addressed?

- What is the relationship between clinical leadership skills and integrated primary care, and what leadership skills are important in providing good integrated care?

How was the review done?

- Several online databases were searched to find studies that discussed the role of leadership in primary care settings, or between primary and hospital care, leadership support and training, and types of leadership skills required.
- The authors were supported by funding from the Gieskes Strijbis funds.

How up to date is this review?

- The authors searched for studies published up to 30 June 2018.

What are the main results of the review?

- The authors found a total of 3207 studies, 20 of which were deemed relevant.
- The results of this review were divided into three main findings:
 - Effectiveness of leadership support programs in improving integrated care:
 - Studies demonstrated that these programs can improve clinical leadership behaviours
 - A study that provided leadership training to nurses found that the nurses felt they were more prepared to provide collaborative care to patients, and were more confident in making changes to care
 - Relationship between clinical leadership and integrated care outcomes:
 - 13 studies found that leadership can positively improve integrated care, and that team leadership (improved teamwork skills) and dispersed leadership (multiple people take on a leadership role) were found to be most effective
 - 2 studies found that strong leadership can help improve patient outcomes such as patient activation (patients are engaged in their health care decisions)
 - Studies also found that physicians were usually said to be the most effective leaders
 - Leadership skills required for integrated primary care:
 - 11 studies reported that the leadership skills that are required are encouraging teamwork, having more communication between team members, being a good role model, and others.
 - 7 studies found that clinical leaders need to have good organization skills such as setting goals and problem solving
 - 2 studies found that leaders need to help their teams develop a shared purpose when providing care to patients

How confident are we in the results?

- This is a recent and moderate-quality systematic review with an AMSTAR score of 5/9.
- The authors found the included studies to be of moderate to low quality, and state that more high-quality research is needed to be confident in the results.

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