

A multidisciplinary approach in primary health care: case study BELGIUM



2 Primary Health Care - Belgium

- Health care is provided by:
 - public or private services with ambulatory care professionals, independent pharmacists, public/private hospitals & facilities for the elderly
- Citizens have free access to medical specialists and hospital care, even as the first point of contact with the health care system (no regulation or filtering system via primary cares)
- Primary care in Belgium is mainly private and based on:
 - Independent physicians (70%), allied (90%), and nurses (50%)
 - Remuneration via fee-for-service payment (for all - independent or not)
 - Free choice of professional by the patient
- Primary health care's organization is divided between the Federal government and federated entities (Communities/Regions)



Challenges

Demand of care

Ageing population
Comorbidity - Chronic care
Mental health
Social determinants
Patient's Expectations

Supply of care

Fragmentation offer
Length of stay hospitals
Expectations health professionals

Societal context

Governmental focus on efficiency + "regionalism"



Will to reinforce a multidisciplinary approach

- Towards collaboration:
 - Policy document Federal government (“Public health Policy for 2009-2013”)
 - Policy documents Communities (“first cares organization in Flanders”)
 - Conferences on collaboration (b.e. “together on the first line” conference)
 - Elaboration of pilot projects - scientific studies (“new jobs for the future”)
 - Platform of collaboration Primary Care,...
- Technical facilitation:
 - eHealth platform (which prof is there, who has information about my patient)
 - Interoperability different systems (b.e. NANDA-NIC-NOC → SNOMED)
 - Electronic medical/nursing record patient (homologation + grant system)
 - Bel-RAI, ... (elderly facilities)



5 Examples Federal level

- Initiatives for primary care's coordination, care between institutions and to promote cooperation between primary care and other levels of the health system:
 - Integrated Services Home care (pushing collaboration grants)
 - **Care pathways:** agreements specifying the tasks to be performed for patients suffering from diabetes and kidney failure (grant if well done)
 - Therapeutic projects in mental health care (→ **Mental Health Coordinating Nurse**)
 - started in April 2007 and aimed to implement an “integrated health services model”, guaranteeing continuity of care from hospital to outside, providing needs-based care to the patient and promoting rehabilitation in society
 - **The National Cancer Plan**
 - aims to strengthen collaboration between all levels of government and to increase multidisciplinary and greater coordination between health care providers (screening centers - hospitals - home cares / physicians - nurses - dieticians - psychologist - researchers) → **Oncology Coordinating Nurses**



Examples Communities level

- Initiatives of collaboration in local Primary care - Flanders (SELS) - Wallonia (CCSD)
 - When necessary, coordination among providers of care is complemented by coordinated social assistance through the creation of networks/platforms
- “**Medical houses**” (around 100 in Belgium):
 - Global approach of the patient (around 500 patients/house)
 - Mostly fixed remuneration system (“all-in” grant/monthly/patient)
 - cooperative administration (by all the team !)
 - Multidisciplinary team of GPs, nurses, social workers, physiotherapists, psychologists, dieticians...
 - Collaboration with local and regional partners
 - **The happiest nurses of Belgium !**



Conclusion

- Political will to stimulate multidisciplinary practices within primary health care in Belgium
- Growing number of initiatives reinforcing multidisciplinary collaboration:
 - **Within an institution: “medical houses”**
 - **Between institutions:**
 - Disease-specific: cancer plan, care pathways, therapeutic projects..,
 - Global approach: GDT, SEL, CCSD (home cares coordination's)
- But:
 - **Fragmentation initiatives / Fragmentation legal framework/ not nationwide**
 - **Challenge:**
 - from multi- to interdisciplinary collaboration (need someone coordinating)
 - ICT must help (need invests)

