Participatory Approaches to Improve Integrated Care Programs: Methods, Experiences, and Early Results Applying Methods from Implementation Research

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Background

• Innovative process improvements are increasingly implemented in integrated care
• Because of the often complex nature, it is challenging to prove effectiveness

• We use evidence-based methods from implementation research
  – monitor and evaluate running integrated care programs
  – understand if and how implemented actions affect the program

• We need to consider all aspects of the implementation of the program
  – Context in which it is being implemented
  – Organizational processes around the programs
  – Perspectives of all relevant stakeholders (in particular the end users)

• Implementation research also promotes the systematic application of research findings in practice (Peters et al 2013).
Participatory Approaches

- ACT@Scale, SUSTAIN, DementiaNet are initiatives to improve integrated care
- Covering a wide variety of integrated care programs and approaches
  - different settings
  - different target populations
  - different improvement actions

- All 3 initiatives are using participatory approaches
  - Local stakeholders design and implement local improvements
  - Cyclic improvement processes
    - Achieve rapid flow of evidence to practice
    - Disseminate knowledge and good practices at national and European level
Collaborative Methodology

• The collaborative approach requires groups to come together periodically to
  – learn and exchange ideas and quality methods
  – exchange their experiences with implementing actions (changes)

• Objective
  – Stimulate rapid improvement
  – Disseminate good ideas
  – Boost learning skills

Elements
1. Topic selection
2. Purpose and expectations
3. Experts recruitment
4. Enrolment of participating teams
5. Learning sessions
6. Action periods
7. Measurement and evaluation
Collaborative Methodology

**Definition**

**Elements**
1. Topic selection
2. Purpose and expectations
3. Experts recruitment
4. Enrolment of participating teams
5. Learning sessions
6. Action periods
7. Measurement and evaluation

**Topics:**
- Selection of specific issue or area
- Existence of examples of good practices
- Research evidence about what is effective
- Improvements and benefits are of significance

**Purpose and expectations**
- Helps deciding whether to take part
- Enables setting the priorities of the collaborative
- Helps planning how to run the collaborative
- Need to reassess the purpose during the collaborative

**Topics from ACT@Scale**
1. Change & stakeholder management
2. Optimization of recruitment-service selection & service adaptation
3. Sustainability and business case
4. Citizen empowerment
Collaborative Methodology

Team set-up

Elements
1. Topic selection
2. Purpose and expectations
3. Experts recruitment
4. Enrollment of participating teams
5. Learning sessions
6. Action periods
7. Measurement and evaluation

• Expert recruitment

Application expert (process)
• Coaches team on improvement methods
• Guides team on improvement application in local setting

Subject matter expert (content)
• Vision of the new system
• Content of the collaborative
• Faculty leadership

• Enrollment of participating teams
  – E.g. decision makers, project manager, implementers, healthcare professionals and patients/informal caregivers
  – Agree on roles and responsibilities
ACT@Scale – Collaborative Methodology

Execution

Elements
1. Topic selection
2. Purpose and expectations
3. Experts recruitment
4. Enrolment of participating teams
5. Learning sessions
6. Action periods
7. Measurement and evaluation

Learning sessions
• Share ideas and define goals, actions (changes)
• Plan and test changes
• Exchange lessons learned

Action periods
• Implement and test changes in local setting
• Collect data to measure impact
• Report progress

Measurement and evaluation
• Challenging, achievable & measurable targets
• Regular
• Share result with whole team

Diagram:
- Plan: Plan the actions and develop a framework to test the change (who, what, when, where).
- Act: Refine the changes based on learning and determine the modifications.
- Do: Test the action and document any problem or unexpected observation.
- Study: Analyze the results, compare the data obtained to the predictions and summarize what has been learned.
Differences

• Order and timing of the elements in the whole process
• Topic selection and criteria
• Implemented interventions and objectives
• Duration of the cycles
• Evaluation ← challenge!

Key difference:
• Recruitment of the domain expert
  – ACT@Scale: @local organizations
    ▪ Increases local site commitment
    ▪ Requires dedicated funding
  – SUSTAIN: @SUSTAIN project team
    ▪ Requires more effort from the local SUSTAIN partners
    ▪ Provides insight into the local barriers, decisions and processes

Themes from SUSTAIN
1. Person centeredness,
2. Prevention,
3. Safety
4. Efficiency

Topics from ACT@Scale
1. Change & stakeholder management
2. Optimization of recruitment-service selection & service adaptation
3. Sustainability and business case
4. Citizen empowerment
Experiences ACT@Scale

1. Select a program with convincing evidence
2. The maturity level of the service and management engagement are key
3. Be effective in running the collaborative meetings
4. Make sure you have sufficient ambassadors to promote the program
5. Build a collaborative team representative of all stakeholders
6. Ensure you address organizational changes necessary
7. Implement the program into the existing care model using substitution of pathway elements
8. Make use of proven care models such as the chronic care model

Experiences available in brochure (print+PDF)
Experiences SUSTAIN

Maturity level of site is related to type of improvement projects:
- Less mature sites
  - Focus on getting to know each other and strengthening collaboration and/or extending collaboration with new partners (e.g. social care agencies)
- More mature sites
  - Focus on improving actual delivery of care (e.g. involving older people in decision-making; joint frailty assessment; more structured multidisciplinary meetings)

Enablers
- Motivation of participating professionals
- Shared sense of urgency and vision
- Commitment at different levels within health and social care agencies

Barriers
- Lack of strong leadership, ownership and accountability
- Key decisions were made by SUSTAIN researchers rather than by local stakeholders
- Lack of continuity of local stakeholders involved
- Competing interests
- No funding for improvement projects from SUSTAIN project
Experiences DementiaNet

**Pros**
- Providing quality feedback for network/learn how to discuss quality issues/learn how to improve (PDCA)
- Network leaders (e.g., GP’s, community nurses, practice nurses): key to support PDCA

**Cons**
- Time issues
- ICT problems: difficulties to gather quality information

**Enablers**
- Invest in the support (coaching) of the network leaders
- Support with practical tools (formats)
- Provide inter professional training

**Barriers:**
- Involvement of GPs is crucial, but difficult to realize
- Competition between organizations (silos)
- Communication barriers: professional/organizational
How to apply lessons learned in your context

**Stakeholders**

- Get decision makers on board ASAP
- Involve academic evaluation teams at start
- Start with champions/ambassadors, but you need more for sustainability
- Invest in communication between silos (e.g. HC and municipality)

**Early engagement**

**Evidence**

- Select drivers with care: use measures that work better for integrated care
- Use the evidence about integrated care components
- Do an evaluability assessment
- Set achievable aims, don’t set targets too soon, it takes a while for change happens
- Be flexible with data collection, be prepared to manage diversity in data
- Have substantial evidence when you communicate success

**Share evidence with data to support story**

**Develop umbrella story**

- Involve all stakeholders
- Identify key challenge
- Explain why innovation is needed
- Story that captures full strategy in/outside organization
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Questions?

Advancing Care Coordination and Telehealth deployment at Scale
ACT@Scale
https://www.act-at-scale.eu

Sustainable Tailored Integrated Care for Older People in Europe
SUSTAIN
www.sustain-eu.org

Dementianet – toward high quality, network-based care
DementieNet
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