



Roles and Profiles of health professionals working in Swiss group practices

Oral Presentation (Scientific)

Author: Renata Josi

Introduction: The Swiss health observatory has projected that the demand for health services could exceed the supply of medical treatment by up to 40% by 2030. This applies especially to the discipline of general medicine. (Laurence Seematter-Bagnoud et al., 2007) The anticipated shortage of (primary) doctors has internationally caused discussions about a good skill mix.

International literature suggests that certain tasks of doctors today could be fulfilled by specially trained nurses in future. Advanced roles of health professionals are also seen as measure to improve retention in the job and improving job attractiveness and by that partially tackling the health workforce shortage. Even though the greatest discussion involves Advanced Nursing Practice (ANP) also other health professionals such as midwives, physiotherapists, occupational therapists and dieticians can fulfill advanced roles in healthcare (Schweizerische Gesundheitsdirektorenkonferenz und Bundesamt für Gesundheit, 2012). Currently there is no systematically collected data available about health professionals working in outpatient settings in Switzerland. Therefore, this study aims to find the current Level of skill mix from a representative sample of Swiss group practices as well as to find information about the educational backgrounds and professional roles of health professionals working in these settings.

Methods: As this study has only started the planned methods as well as the expected results will be described. The results of the survey will be available at the conference. A list of physicians' networks was obtained from the Swiss Forum Managed Care and was completed by a hand search in the internet. The networks will be contacted with a Letter and via telephone to invite all group practices to participate in the online survey. The survey will ask participants whether health professionals are working in their group practice as well as about their educational backgrounds. Furthermore, the questionnaire will ask whether health professionals working in this setting do work in advanced roles or have extended scopes of practice. The survey questions will be translated from German to French and Italian to cover all language areas of Switzerland. The questions will be validated before activating the online survey.

Expected results: It is expected to gain information from a representative sample of Swiss group practices in different cantons whether health professionals work in those settings and if yes, which roles they have and what their scopes of practice are. This will give a picture of who is working in group practices in Switzerland and where advanced roles of health professionals are yet established. Furthermore, the educational backgrounds of these health professionals will be explored, which will inform further research on different educational pathways of health professionals in Switzerland.

Discussion and Conclusion: The results of this study will provide basic data on health professionals working in group practices and their professional roles in Switzerland. This new collected data will be the basis for further research projects of the author and could inform other researchers interested in the area of advanced role of health professionals.