



IncuPA - A project incubator to optimize the support of informal caregivers (ICs) in French-speaking Switzerland

Oral Presentation (Scientific)

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Background: ICs play an essential role in our healthcare system. The shortage in its resources and qualified professionals increases the pressure on ICs, putting their health and quality of Life at risk. Optimizing the support provided to ICs is therefore a public health priority involving diverse organizations, such as associations, authorities, professionals or researchers. IncuPA aims to address this issue in French-speaking Switzerland with a project incubator, to stimulate innovation in the field of ICs support using a collaborative approach.

Research question: In 2017, we conducted a feasibility study to evaluate the relevance of IncuPA. Our core question focused on the potential usefulness of diverse activities for the diverse organizations involved in supporting ICs. In addition, we aimed at describing the strengths and challenges identified by these organizations regarding the quality of support provided to ICs, as well as their use of evaluation procedures and scientific information.

Method and material: 167 organizations working closely with ICs (associations and professionals) received a first online survey. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with representatives of a private company, a health insurance and the authorities in three cantons. Another survey was sent to the research and teaching personnel of the HES-SO Health Faculty. Surveys collected quantitative and qualitative information, which we analyzed accordingly.

Results: The 86 participating organizations reported challenges in making their offerings accessible for ICs, coordinating with other organizations, and using scientific evidence. 94% of the respondents reported interest for and 92% motivation participate in at least one activity of IncuPA. Qualitative and quantitative results converged towards three core missions for IncuPA: Providing opportunities for (1) innovation drawing on the resources of diverse organizations (e.g. research expertise, field experience and authorities knowledge). which requires (2) collaboration (e.g. identifying priorities together). which in turn necessitates (3) exchanges and trainings (e.g. about best practices). Among the 24 participating members of the research and teaching personnel stemming from the seven schools of Health, all indicated they would commit to at least one possible activity and provide expertise in a relevant area.

Discussion and conclusion: This feasibility study confirmed the relevance of a collaborative platform supporting innovation by bringing together key players in ICs support, where researchers can facilitate access to scientific knowledge and methodology, professionals can share their good practices, associations can speak up for ICs views, and authorities can convey political and strategic issues. Our next challenge is to develop the business plan for IncuPA.