Primary care provider perceptions of the challenges of managing patients with mental-physical multimorbidity: A qualitative study

Matthew Menear PhD1,2, Pasquale Roberge PhD3, Anne-Marie Cloutier1 & Louise Fournier PhD4,5

1 CHU de Québec Research Centre, 2 Laval University, 3 Sherbrooke University, 4 CHUM Research Centre, 5 University of Montreal

Email: matthew.menear.1@ulaval.ca, Twitter: @mattmenear

Introduction

- Every year, more than 1 out of 10 Canadians are directly affected by mental illness and more than half of these individuals also suffer from one or more comorbid chronic diseases.1-2
- Mental-physical multimorbidity is a commonly encountered phenomenon in primary care settings.3-4
- There have been few studies exploring primary care providers’ experiences managing patients with mental-physical multimorbidity and the unique challenges they face in delivering high-quality care to these patients.

Objectives

- To explore primary care providers’ perspectives on patient, provider and organizational factors that challenge the delivery of high-quality care to patients with mental-physical multimorbidity.

Methods

- **Design:** Study was conducted as part of a multiple case study with embedded units of analysis.

- **Data collection:** Semi-structured interviews, observations, documents

- **Data analysis:** Thematic analysis (deductive & inductive) guided by conceptual frameworks.

- **Institutional framework:** Integrated care model

- **Purposive sampling:** Primary care clinics in the Montreal region

- **Sample size:** 61 primary care clinics, 15 local services networks taking part in the study.

- **Institutional funding:** Canadian Health Services Research Foundation (CHSRF), École de santé publique de l’Université de Montréal.

- **Ethical considerations:** Institutional review board approval.

Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case study</th>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Case 1 - CSSA</td>
<td>Downtown Montreal</td>
<td>Social relationships, inter-organizational linkages, values and norms of trust and mutual support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case 2 - CSSB</td>
<td>East Montreal</td>
<td>Social relationships, inter-organizational linkages, values and norms of trust and mutual support</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Technological characteristics:** Information technology that supports the flow of knowledge in the clinic

- **Practice Ecosystem Domain:**
  - **Structural characteristics:**
    - Proximity of care
    - Knowledge and experience
    - Patient characteristics
  - **Technological characteristics:**
    - Information system
  - **Epistemic characteristics:**
    - Conceptual frameworks

- **Social characteristics:**
  - Social relationships, inter-organizational linkages, values and norms of trust and mutual support

- **Clinical domain:**
  - Attitudes and beliefs
  - Discipline of practice
  - Training and education

- **Scope of practice:**
  - Services provided

Conclusions

- Factors at patient, provider, organizational and system levels make it challenging to manage primary care patients with mental-physical multimorbidity.
- There are challenges related to providing comprehensive, patient-centred treatment and longer term care.
- Major breakdowns in interprofessional and integrated care for these patients.

Acknowledgements

- The first author’s PhD was supported by CHIR, the University of Montreal and the TUTOR-f program.
- Projet Dialogue was funded by the Canadian Health Services Research Foundation (CHSRF), École de santé publique de l’Université de Montréal (ESPP), Institut national de santé publique du Québec (INSPIQ), Quebec Ministry of Health and Social Services (MSSS), Groupe interuniversitaire de recherche sur les urgences (GIUR) and the 15 local services networks taking part in the study.

References


**Figure:**

- **Figure 1:** Flowchart of the qualitative approach.

**Table:**

- **Table 1:** Characteristics of the study population.

**Figure:**

- **Figure 2:** Systematic typology for the practice ecosystem domain.