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Title: ***Do we treat all patients equal? Equity as a criterion to evaluate quality of primary care.***

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Abstract

Background and aim

Quality of health services can be defined at two levels. First, as the degree to which health services for individuals and populations increase the likelihood of the desired health outcomes for patients and communities. And second, the degree to which they are consistent with current professional knowledge and scientific evidence. Therefore in the assessment of quality of care, patient and staff safety, following dimensions are recognized as essential: clinical effectiveness, efficiency, patient-centeredness, timeliness, continuity of care and integrativeness.

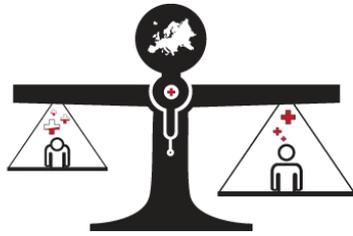
This workshop focuses on the principle of “equity” as an additional dimension in the evaluation of quality of care. Equity refers to the idea that services should be (and in reality effective ‘are’) available to all targeted people and that the offered care should not (and in reality ‘does not’) vary according to the patient’s personal characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, geographic location, or socioeconomic status.

To introduce and illustrate the concept of equity and its theoretical background, to discuss its usefulness in relation to quality of care, and to explore the possibilities to measure the ‘grade of equity’ in the context of quality of care assessment.

Organization of workshop

Starting from a (virtual) waiting room with high variability in the patients presenting themselves (ethnic and socioeconomic background, gender, reason for encounter, ...), the group of participants will be challenged to think about how patients’ characteristics determine the variety and intensity of care they receive. This group discussion will be fed by short PowerPoint presentations introducing the theory on social inequality and inequity in health, determinants of inequity in health, and inequity in health care.

Next, the participants will be asked to brainstorm on how the concept of equity can be introduced into the context of (assessment of) quality of care (guided small group work), followed by a plenary presentation of the group work. Finally, it will be discussed how equity could be measured when assessing quality of care and participants will be invited to share their experiences (plenary discussion).



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Learning objectives

By the end of this session, participants will have knowledge on the concept of equity in health and health care, its underlying mechanisms, and its possible value in the assessment of quality of care. They will be familiar with a framework that might contribute to answering the question on how to measure equity in primary care. They are able to introduce this new insight during discussions with colleagues.

Conclusion

This workshop starts the discussion on assessing quality of care from an equity-perspective. On the long term this workshop might contribute to the writing of a position paper on this theme, based on the theoretical insights of equity development, implemented into quality assessment procedures in primary care.