

Improving Quality in Healthcare: A Case Study in Dental Primary Care in Scotland

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Background:



Improving quality is fundamental for health-care organisations. One means of ensuring high quality, effective care is the development of evidence based guidance. However, there is no clear guidance on how best to translate this evidence into routine clinical practice¹.

Numerous studies have explored the impact of individual factors but few have explored the impact of organisational level factors.

Individual factors, based on behavioural change theories, only account for about 30% of the variability in professional behaviour.² This leaves a considerable gap some of which may be explained by organisational factors.

This study is investigating which characteristics of primary care organisations are most influential on the translation of guidance into practice.

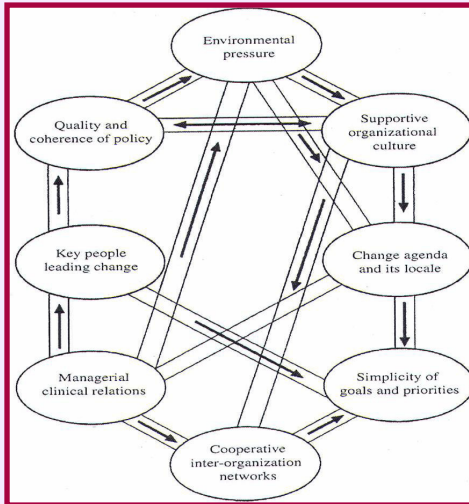


Objectives:

(1) To explore the structure, culture and management of primary care organisations.

(2) To develop a self-report instrument to measure the structure, culture and management of general dental practices.

(3) To determine, which organisational characteristics are most influential on knowledge translation.



Box 1: Receptive Health Care Contexts for Change
Pettigrew, Ferlie and McKee, 1992

Design:

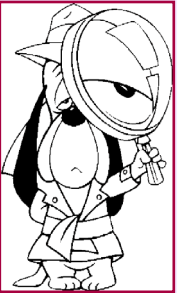
The study is being undertaken in line with the Receptive Health Care Contexts for Change Framework. (Box 1) This framework explores the notion of 'receptivity' to change and highlights the interplay of many variables including the content, context and process of change.

The study comprises three phases:

(1) A literature review exploring organisational change in primary healthcare organisations, focusing on knowledge translation.

(2) Development and validation of a self-report instrument to measure the structure, culture and management of general dental practices.

(3) Dental Practice Case Studies, collecting data on the structure, culture and management of general dental practices.



Findings will be synthesised to explore the relationships between structure, culture and management of dental practices and their compliance with guidance as well as the impact of the guidance context.

Expected Findings & Impact:

(1) Identification of organisational characteristics that influence the translation of guidance and the impact of guidance context.



(2) Contribution to a knowledge translation framework.

(3) Inform patients, healthcare professionals, guidance developers and policy makers with a view to contributing to the Scottish Government's strategic objectives, ultimately improving effectiveness, safety and quality of care for patients.

Progress:

- It has been confirmed that Ethical and R & D approval are not required.
- Relevant training undertaken.
- A review of evidence synthesis methods has been conducted to inform the literature review methodology.
- A 'Best Fit' Framework synthesis of the literature has been conducted.
- The literature review findings have informed the development of an interview schedule, covering leadership, environmental pressure, relationships and organisational culture.
- Dental practices have been ranked in terms of their compliance with dental decontamination guidance and 4 practices have been recruited (2 high compliance; 2 low compliance).
- Interviews are underway.
- Dental practice visits and observations have taken place.

References:

1. Grimshaw J M *et al*, Health Technol Assess 2004 8 (6)
2. Goddin *et al*. Implementation Science 2008, 3:36



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This study is a Doctoral Fellowship funded by the Chief Scientists Office. The poster expresses the views of the author and not those of the funding body.