

Identifying primary care referral patterns in the Health Care Homes trial

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Background

The Health Care Homes trial is based on the patient centred medical home model and is designed to promote team-based management of chronic conditions in primary care. Referral data may assist the implementation of Health Care Homes by exploring referral patterns and identify allied health providers considered part of a Health Care Home's 'health care neighbourhood'.

Objectives

The objective was to explore the feasibility of using a shared care planning tool to identify Health Care Home general practice referral patterns for patients enrolled in the Health Care Homes trial.

Method

This project was set in the Perth North Primary Health Network, which is one of the 10 national pilot regions for the Health Care Homes trial. Health Care Home general practice referral data extracted from a shared care planning tool were explored using visualisation software.

Results

A total of 566 referrals were made for Health Care Homes enrolled patients via the shared care planning tool between the October 2017 and April 2019. These referrals were spread between professions, including: podiatry (n=215), physiotherapy (n=124), dietitian (n=74), pharmacy (n=58), optometry (n=33), diabetes educator (n=23), counselor (n=20), psychology (n=15), and other (n=4).

Conclusions

Identification of referral patterns to allied health providers was feasible using shared care planning tool data across the pilot region. Referral information is now informing practice facilitation by the Perth North Primary Health Network. Referral pattern data was limited to Health Care Home enrolled patients from a single primary health network, using one shared care planning tool