

Interprofessional Collaboration within primary care level

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Emergency department (ED) use by frail elderly is increasing in Belgium. A recent survey showed that 25% of patients who arrive to ED referred by their general physician (GP) are aged between 65 and 79 years old, and 20% are above 80 years old. This increased use of ED by older patients may be viewed as an expression of health system failure. It confirms the need to strengthen primary care level to adequately manage the ongoing needs of the population, and to provide the appropriate care for patients, at the right moment, at the right level of care, with the right human and material resources. Strategies aiming at strengthening primary care level include improving interprofessional collaboration (IPC) within this level. IPC leads to increase system capacity by providing a means for professionals to achieve more than they can on their own. In this presentation we report the findings of a recent action-research that aimed at assessing IPC between GPs and primary care nurses in Wallonia in different contexts, and identifying target priorities for improving this collaboration. Two issues were identified as common priorities: communication and task delegation. Actions prioritized by each participating area were related to these two issues and took local needs into account. Based on these results, strategies aiming at enhancing IPC within Belgian primary care level should include promoting the existent information sharing system, and a proper training and skill development for workforces.