
CONFERENCE ABSTRACT

Sustainable Implementation of Polypharmacy reviews as part of integrated care at Scale

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Medication is the most common form of intervention to prevent disease or slow disease progression, with guidelines for single diseases recommending evidence based drug treatments. There remains the mismatch between prescribing guidelines for specific medical conditions and the range of clinical complexity found in individual adults with multiple morbidities. The resulting polypharmacy (use of multiple medicines) can be both appropriate and inappropriate and the key healthcare aim for individual patients is to ensure the on-going safe and effective use of their multiple medicines.

NHS Scotland developed, designed and implemented national policy to consider the patient pathway and the flow of work needed to be undertaken in clinical practice to address appropriate management of Polypharmacy. Implementation across all 14 health boards serving a population of 5.5 million people in Scotland utilised Kotter's 8 steps[1] for implementation of change supported by clinical and policy leadership, economic data and clinical outcome data. NHS Scotland have provided leadership for a European work plan. SIMPATHY, Stimulating Innovation in Management of Polypharmacy and Adherence in the Elderly, (www.simpathy.eu) has benchmarked European strategies to address polypharmacy and through in-depth case studies in 10 EU countries, is developing strategies and tools to support innovation in polypharmacy and adherence management across Europe.

Synthesis of the findings from application of change management tools such as Kotter, PESTEL (Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental and Legal) and SWOT (Strengths Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats), together with the case studies serve to inform further innovation. Comparison was made to other EU countries, that had started to implement a programme..

Work undertaken in the Scottish programme has been used to develop an economic tool that may be used by other countries to explore the economic benefits of a national polypharmacy management programme. Transferability of innovation will be supported through publication of a reference book based on the findings of SIMPATHY.

Synthesis of findings confirmed that key principles of Kotter influenced the successful implementation of national policy for management of polypharmacy in Scotland. It was identified that policy and clinical leadership were essential drivers along with a policy change that supported implementation in the service together with contractual arrangements . Lessons learned from national policy implementation in Scotland and from local programmes in other EU countries, including facilitators and barriers, together with key features of an economic tool will inform innovation of integrated care at a policy level.

References:

1- Kotter, John P. Leading Change. United States: Harvard Business Review Press, 2012.

Keywords: appropriate polypharmacy; kotter & change management & economic tools
