

## A Qualitative Study Investigating the Relationship Between External Context and the Mechanism of Change for the Implementation of Goal-oriented Primary Care

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**Abstract :** Goal-oriented care is a concept gaining increased interest as an approach to go towards more coordinated and integrated primary care. It places patients' personal life goals at the core of health care support, hereby shifting the focus from "what's the matter with this patient" to "what matters to this patient." In Flanders/Belgium, various primary care providers, health and social care organizations and governmental bodies have picked up this concept and have initiated actions to facilitate this approach. The implementation of goal-oriented care not only happens on the micro-level, but it also requires efforts on the meso- and macro-level. Within implementation research, there is a growing recognition that the context in which an intervention takes place strongly relates to its implementation outcomes. However, when investigating contextual variables, the external context and its impact on implementation processes is often overlooked. This study aims to explore how we can better identify and understand the external context and how it relates to the mechanism of change within the implementation process of goal-oriented care in Flanders/Belgium. Results can be used to support and guide initiatives to introduce innovative approaches such as goal-oriented care inside an organization or in the broader primary care landscape. We have conducted qualitative research, performing in-depth interviews with n=23 respondents who have affinity with the implementation of goal-oriented care within their professional function. This led to in-depth insights from a wide range of actors, with meso-level and/or macro-level perspectives on the implementation of goal-oriented care. This means that we have interviewed actors that are not only involved with initiatives to implement goal-oriented care, but also actors that actively give form to the external context in which goal-oriented care is implemented. Data were collected using a semi-structured interview guide, audio recorded, and analyzed first inductively and then deductively using various theories and concepts that derive from organizational research. Our preliminary findings suggest that our findings can contribute to further define actions needed for sustainable implementation of goal-oriented primary care. It gives insights in the dynamics between contextual variables and implementation efforts, hereby indicating towards those contextual variables that can be further shaped to facilitate the implementation of an innovation such as goal-oriented care. That organizational theories can help understand the mechanism of change of implementation processes with a macro-level perspective. Institutional theories, contingency theories, resources dependency theories and others can expose the mechanism of change for an innovation such as goal-oriented care. Our findings can contribute to further define actions needed for sustainable implementation of goal-oriented primary care. It gives insights in the dynamics between contextual variables and implementation efforts, hereby indicating towards those contextual variables that can be further shaped to facilitate the implementation of an innovation such as goal-oriented care.

**Keywords :** goal-oriented care, implementation processes, organizational theories, person-centered care, implementation research

**Conference Title :** ICPHHMP 2024 : International Conference on Public Health, Health Management and Policy

**Conference Location :** Madrid, Spain

**Conference Dates :** March 18-19, 2024