

Collaboration in Palliative Care Networks in Urban and Rural Regions of Switzerland

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Abstract : Due to aging populations, the need for seamless palliative care provision is of central interest for western societies. An essential aspect of palliative care delivery is the quality of collaboration amongst palliative care providers. Therefore, the current research is based on Bainbridge's conceptual framework, which provides an outline for the evaluation of palliative care provision. This study is the first one to investigate the predictive validity of spatial distribution on the quantity of interaction amongst various palliative care providers. Furthermore, based on the familiarity principle, we examine whether the extent of collaboration influences the perceived quality of collaboration among palliative care providers in urban versus rural areas of Switzerland. Based on a population-representative survey of Swiss palliative care providers, the results of the current study show that professionals in densely populated areas report higher absolute numbers of interactions and are more satisfied with their collaborative practice. This indicates that palliative care providers who work in urban areas are better embedded into networks than their counterparts in more rural areas. The findings are especially important, considering that efficient collaboration is a prerequisite to achieve satisfactory patient outcomes. Conclusively, measures should be taken to foster collaboration in weakly interconnected palliative care networks.

Keywords : collaboration, healthcare networks, palliative care, Switzerland

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