

Guest editorial

Commentary: "Evaluating integrated health care: a system of measurement"

This article on measuring integrated health care adds original thinking to the published literature. This is extremely relevant work for many different health care systems in the world. The measure specifies the actual mechanisms (referrals, guidelines, chains of care, network managers and pooled resources) that both are or should be in place within or between organizations to indicate the depth of integration that has been achieved.

As such, it is more of an objective measure using criteria than that of Browne et al. (2004), with a score achieved by consensus among potential or actual partner agencies or programs.

The distinction made between actual and optimal integration is a real contribution to the field illustrating that integration targets or mechanisms to be in place between and within organizations should be specified before doing the integrating work.

While the measure has been designed to measure actual and optimal integration of services along a continuum of care within one sector, health, it could also be used to measure intersectoral integration as in the Browne et al. measure.

Both measures describing actual and optimal integration could be enhanced by simultaneously using the Partnership Synergy Questionnaire to identify why optimal integration is or is not being achieved.

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