

SUPSI

Interprofessional collaboration: how do health professionals interact with each other in collaborative practice situations?

Axis 6 – Social systems and public health

Interview with Monica Bianchi, Project Director, SUPSI



Tell us briefly about the project, starting with the problem tackled.

This research project is financed by the Swiss National Fund for Research at the Haute Ecole de Santé Vaud (HESAV) for the 2016-2018 period, and is conducted in the three linguistic regions of Switzerland; SUPSI is part of the team, and conducts research in Southern Switzerland. The project focuses on the topic of interprofessional collaboration (IPC) in healthcare institutes. The term IPC derives from a number of international definitions, and can be summarised as collaboration between different healthcare professionals in the activities associated with patient care, and the involvement of the patient in her/his care. More specifically, the objective of this project is to observe the factors that facilitate or hinder IPC, and the interactions that take place between the various professional operators in collaborative practice situations (e.g.: during meetings, examinations, co-therapies or in informal situations). The various observation settings are spread out over French,

Italian and German speaking Switzerland, and integrate different institutions where it is possible to analyse care situations for acute, chronic and rehabilitative pathologies. The research methodology is qualitative and the data is collected with semi-structured interviews, direct observation and video-recordings. The aim is therefore to identify the facilitating factors (macro-social approach), and observe the mechanisms by which these factors help create collaborative practices (micro-social approach). The "conversation analysis" methodology utilised to analyse the videos makes it possible to study the interactions in greater depth, after having selected episodes that are particularly representative in terms of IPC.

What initial results have been obtained?

The results obtained so far are based on the first phase of the research project, which involved ten focus groups and individual interviews with expert IPC educators and with professional operators working in territorial institutions where IPC is implemented (a total number of 35 people were interviewed). Analysis of the literal transcriptions allowed three main themes to emerge: the participants build their own definitions of IPC, based on communication, personal factors and adaptation to situations; the individual features of the professional operators (values and attitudes), and their working conditions (space, technology, volume of information) are fundamental elements for successful IPC;



the IPC facilitating factors and the obstacles identified are associated with the healthcare context of the patients, with the complexity of their situations and the time periods involved. Now, in the second phase, the focus moves to conducting conversation analyses of the video recordings, and the final results will be obtained at the end of the year.

What are the strong points of the project? And the problems?

The strong points are associated with the fact that this project may help fill in a number of gaps still present in the literature: an overview of the institutional settings in which IPC is practised in Switzerland; evidence related to the definition and conceptualisation of IPC by health professional and educators; evidence gathered by observing episodes of real-life clinical practice between professionals, which will make it possible to understand how they interact, collaborate, communicate. The critical aspect is associated with the time required in order to transcribe and analyse the filmed conversations.

Do you remember anything interesting, amusing or unusual that occurred during the project?

The interesting aspect that I think emerged in the course of the project is associated with the cultural differences between the three Swiss Regions. These can be observed in the video recordings, and also emerge in the course of the analysis phase conducted jointly by the researchers, who, in turn, belong to these different cultures.

Could other projects develop from this one?

Definitely! One aspect in which the team is interested consists of finding a way in which the results obtained can be transferred to clinical practice, allowing professionals to really use them.

Apart from you, who else was on the project team?

Lilliana Staffoni, Veronika Schoeb, David Pichonnaz, Camille Bécherraz, Isabelle Knutti, all from the Haute Ecole de Santé Vaud.

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