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Swiss Home Care Data: patient profiles and quality measures for home care

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Institutions and collaborations
1. ZHAW Zurich University of Applied Sciences, School of Health Professions, Institut of Health Sciences
2. Obsan Swiss Health Observatory
3. University of Bern, ISPM Institute of Social and Preventive Medicine
4. ZHAW Zurich University of Applied Sciences, School of Management an Law, Winterthur Institute of Health Economics
5. Spitex Schweiz

Background and challenges
Home care services have increased importance as providers of long term care (LTC). The planning and organisation as well as quality management of home care services is essential: health policy makers, service providers and consumers (patients, informal caregivers) need sound data on supply, demand and quality of LTC.
Yet, in Switzerland, the availability of such information and the access to it is still scarce. The Swiss Association of Home Care Organizations, "Spitex Schweiz" runs its own, yet scientifically unexploited, database, the "Home Care Data pool (HCD)"

Goals
The purpose of this project is to expand the HCD and explore its potential. Therefore, additional indicators will be developed and a linkage to other datasets initiated. Three sub-studies will address the following specific topics:

A) Analysis of HCD and linkage with other health services statistics
   Aim: Examine data quality of the HCD, link the database with other health services statistics and explore its potential for research in the field of home care and LTC.

B) Further development and upgrading of the HCD
   Aim: Improve HCD with regard to integration of patient/caregiver needs in home care quality measurement and adaptation of the existing and development of additional Home Care Quality Indicators (HCQI)

C) Framework for the future public use of HCD
   Aim: Prepare the future use of the HCD by designing a conceptual framework and recommendations for possible applications, hosting and quality control of HCD.

Methods
Study A is based on the already existing HCD in Switzerland and analyses the following topics:
- plausibilisation and quality control of HCD;
- data linkage of HCD with other health care statistics;
- data analysis (patient profiles; patterns of care; patient trajectories).

Study B will investigate:
- integration of patient/caregiver needs in quality measurement;
- adaptations of actual quality indicators: It will be studied whether the quality indicators currently in use are still appropriate for measuring home care quality.

Study C will develop a framework for the future public use of HCD in a systematic process with stakeholders.

Expected Results
First, the planned project will allow a deeper insight into patterns of home care utilisation in Switzerland and thus complement the official "Spitex" statistics.
Second, the planned study will improve the already existing database on home care (HCD) and prepare the data for the need of selected user groups (in particular in relation to research and policy issues).
Third, the foundation of a comprehensive quality indicator system for home care services will be established.

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