



Integrated Care pathways

Integrated Care pathways

- Definition
- Development process
- Examples

Integrated Care pathways-definition

- Care Pathways can be viewed as algorithms in as much as they offer a flow chart format of the decisions to be made and the care to be provided for a given patient or patient group for a given condition in a step-wise sequence.

Integrated Care pathways

- An ICP aims to have
 - The right people
 - Doing the right things
 - In the right order
 - At the right time
 - In the right place
 - With the right outcome
 - All with attention to the patient experience

Integrated Care pathways

- It is not
 - a protocol
 - a flow chart of events
 - a care map
 - a process map
 - a decision tree
 - a guideline
 - a care plan

Integrated Care pathways

They may contain protocols and guidelines and they may start their developmental histories as a process map or flow chart, but unless they have a mechanism of recording variations/deviations from planned care/activities when used as record of patient care, then it is not a true clinical care pathways

Integrated Care pathways-writing

- Formulated by multidisciplinary team involved in care
- Evidence based and reflect best practice
- Circulated widely for comment
- Date of ratification, ratifying body and review process
- Record variance to recommended care
- Include patient perspective
- Implemented with a teaching package
- Regular audit

Integrated Care pathways-benefits

- Support the introduction of evidence-based medicine and use of clinical guidelines
- Support clinical effectiveness, risk management and clinical audit
- Improve multidisciplinary communication, teamwork and care planning
- Can support continuity and co-ordination of care across different clinical disciplines and sectors;
- Provide explicit and well-defined standards for care;
- Help reduce variations in patient care (by promoting standardisation);
- Help improve clinical outcomes;
- Help improve and even reduce patient documentation
- Support training;

Integrated Care pathways-benefits

- Optimise the management of resources;
- Can help ensure quality of care and provide a means of continuous quality improvement;
- Support the implementation of continuous clinical audit in clinical practice
- Support the use of guidelines in clinical practice;
- Help empower patients;
- Help manage clinical risk;
- Help improve communications between different care sectors;
- Disseminate accepted standards of care;
- Provide a baseline for future initiatives;
- Not prescriptive: don't override clinical judgement;
- Expected to help reduce risk;
- Expected to help reduce costs by shortening hospital stays

Integrated Care pathways-problems

- May appear to discourage personalised care
- Risk increasing litigation
- Don't respond well to unexpected changes in a patient's condition
- Suit *standard* conditions better than unusual or unpredictable ones
- Require commitment from staff and establishment of an adequate organisational structure
- Problems of introduction of new technology
- May take time to be accepted in the workplace
- Need to ensure variance and outcomes are properly recorded, audited and acted upon.

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Examples