Effecting change in primary care management of respiratory conditions: a global scoping exercise and literature review of educational interventions to inform the IPCRG's E-Quality initiative

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Abstract:
This discussion paper describes a scoping exercise and literature review commissioned by the International Primary Care Respiratory Group (IPCRG) to inform their E-Quality programme which seeks to support small-scale educational projects to improve respiratory management in primary care. Our narrative review synthesises information from three sources: publications concerning the global context and health systems development; a literature search of Medline, CINAHL and Cochrane databases; and a series of eight interviews conducted with members of the IPCRG faculty. Educational interventions sit within complex healthcare, economic, and policy contexts. It is essential that any development project considers the local circumstances in terms of economic resources, political circumstances, organisation and administrative capacities, as well as the specific quality issue to be addressed. There is limited evidence (in terms of changed clinician behaviour and/or improved health outcomes) regarding the merits of different educational and quality improvement approaches. Features of educational interventions that were most likely to show some evidence of effectiveness included being carefully designed, multifaceted, engaged health professionals in their learning, provided ongoing support, were sensitive to local circumstances, and delivered in combination with other quality improvement strategies. To be effective, educational interventions must consider the complex healthcare systems within which they operate. The criteria for the IPCRG E-Quality awards thus require applicants not only to describe their proposed educational initiative but also to consider the practical and local barriers to successful implementation, and to propose a robust evaluation in terms of changed clinician behaviour or improved health outcomes.

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