

COHEHRE Annual Conference 2019 Integrated care: new trends in higher education and research

Workshop on 'Empowerment of service users & providers' - Miquel A Bru

WHO defines empowerment as “a process through which people gain greater control over decisions and actions affecting their health” and should be seen as both an individual and a community process.(1)

The usefulness and benefits of this “empowerment process” has emerged as a new paradigm that can help improve medical outcomes while lowering costs of treatment. Through healthcare management this process seems particularly promising in the management of chronic diseases, based on the principle that patients who take co-responsibility of their condition will enhance medical outcomes at lower cost.

Be it coincidence or not, patient empowerment is occurring at a time when patients have more information than ever before due to the technology revolution. We can easily access to medical information in internet, monitor our vital signals with our smartphone or smartwatch and even access to a DTC genetic test. This data can be very powerful, but it can also be confusing, if we together can not help the patient and the providers to turn this data to information that ends into knowledge. Always with the direction that being knowledgeable is useful only as a necessary prerequisite to being able to act self-responsibly.

In literature, four components have been reported as being fundamental to the process of patient empowerment: 1) understanding by the patient of his/her role; 2) acquisition by patients of sufficient knowledge to be able to engage with their healthcare provider; 3) patient skills; and 4) the presence of a facilitating environment. (2)

In essence, like any relationship, engage and involve patients will depend on every case, taking in account their own culture, habits, personal conditions, etc. Therefore learning about each other is a key factor in the process.

The aim of this workshop is explore and test how using innovation methodologies alike the design thinking methodology, we can learn and construct a point of view based on our audience that will lead us to the right policies that encourages patients to be actively involved in their providers' health services

(1) *Health promotion glossary*. Geneva: World Health Organization; 1998.

(2) Angelmar R, Bermann BP. *Patient empowerment and efficient health outcomes. Financing sustainable healthcare in Europe*. 2007 :139–162. [accessed 26 February 2009]