

Challenges Associated With the Concept of Collaboration

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1. Introduction, Arguments for

In recent years, the concept of inter professional collaboration in the health system has attracted huge interest due to the impact it has on quality of care and its outcomes (1). Researchers referred collaboration as hard word, complicated, confusing and contradictory in conceptualization, so that the concept has vaguely been used (2). Ambiguity in the meaning of collaboration has prevented its benefits as a variable in studies that meant to investigate its efficacy (3). Given that lack of clarity has led to use of different forms of the concept in research and in practice (4) and this ambiguity may have led to inconsistency of reports by health system employees on the level of collaboration in clinical settings (5).

2. Arguments Against

Literature indicates that there is no commonly accepted definition for collaboration (6), and it has lost its definition complexity as a concept because of excessive use, which has led to incorrect and different understanding among healthcare authorities and medical workers (7). Based on literature review, lack of clear definition, consensus and coordination between researchers and scholars in relation to the concept of collaboration is the main challenge. The researches and multiple attempts were performed to define the concept of collaboration, its structure and dimensions, similar concepts, importance and benefits. Despite of the efforts taken, achieving the concept of collaboration, its characteristics and features are still facing with problems. The multiple definitions have led to insufficient understanding and lack of presenting a formal definition on the concept of collaboration (8), so that despite numerous studies conducted on collaboration, the concept of collaboration has been replaced by the other terms including communication, team work, and partnership. The ambiguity in the definition of the collaboration concept led to another challenge, existence of numerous properties and character-

istics in literature. So that, multiple definitions include a wide array of messages that imply attributes to describe this concept. Despite this diversity cannot decide which one exactly related to the concept of collaboration.

Regarding the existing disagreements over the definition of collaboration, it could be said that the main issue is the absence of a precise theory on collaboration in the field of health care. Existing theories about collaboration in other fields such as sociology, psychology, management, and business have been used to support collaboration in the fields of health care. In terms of organizational, managerial, and operational view, these professions are different from health care professions (9).

Finally, inadequate understanding of the concept has led the tools used in this field cannot define and measure collaboration (10). In addition, these tools focus on approaches, satisfaction of collaboration between physicians and nurses in specific environments, and using tools to measure the other concepts such as communication, team work, autonomy, authority, performance control and attitude (11) caused more difficulties for the studies on collaboration.

3. Evaluation

Challenges mentioned in relation to the collaboration concept led to difficulty in achieving proper definition and understanding of this concept.

4. Recommendation

According to the evaluation using strategies, such as attempt to provide an appropriate definition of concept by doing qualitative research and represent the theory associated with collaboration derived from actual data by conducting qualitative research are recommended.

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Authors' Contributions

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