BILANZ - Accounting dialogues as a means to promote patient-oriented primary care and improve treatment of people with chronic disease (Study design)

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Challenges of Chronic Care
- prevalence no set objectives for treatments
- often inadequately specified underlying risk-resource-profile
- despite big efforts, treatment does not always meet patients' needs
- patients and general practitioners (GPs) are (latently) dissatisfied

Systematized negotiation and agreement on objectives, incorporating existing resources is required

Project goals
- enhancing the achievement of objectives mutually agreed upon by patients and GPs regarding
  - prevention of lifestyle-related progression of chronic disease and its outcome
  - better use of the patient's coping skills and salutogenic resources
- demonstrating that an appropriate communication training for GPs and a modified conversation structure (seminannual accounting dialogues) enhance the achievement of objectives
- promoting patient autonomy by proceeding on a case-by-case basis and in a resource-oriented way

Study design
- Mixed methods design (see figures I und II):
  - cluster-randomised, controlled and blinded intervention study
  - qualitative study
  Both completed by health economic evaluation
- Observation period: 1 year for each GP's surgery
- Intervention I:
  - 24 lessons of intensive training for GPs (cluster level) targeted on accounting dialogues (see Box 4 )
  - identifying salutogenic resources and self-management skills
  - defining problems, shared decision making and patient-centred communication
- Intervention II:
  - conducting semiannual accounting dialogues (approx. 20-30 minutes each)
  - agreeing on assignments and objectives
  - rechecking the achievement of the set goals
  - setting new goals, if necessary
  (control group: dialogues focussing on prevention, but no set objectives)

GP training concept
- participant-oriented evaluation of needs and conveying the concept of accounting dialogues
- simulating feasibility in practice by means of everyday situations from the participants' surgeries
Considering in addition the following issues regarding the treatment of patients with chronic conditions
  - social situation / gender aspects / salutogenesis and biography
  - conversation skills (accounting dialogue, narration)
  - structuring the long-term relationship between GP and patient (epicritic case reflection)

Eligibility criteria for surgeries and patients
- research GP surgeries associated with the departments of general medicine at Düsseldorf or Witten University
- willingness to participate in the training
- willingness to conduct and keep records on accounting dialogues at two (control group) or three (intervention group) points in time
- consecutive recruitment of patients suffering from one or more chronic diseases, aged 18 to 70, adequate German language skills in order to answer the survey
- Qualitative sub-study: willingness to conduct video-recorded conversations and a follow-up survey

Anticipated outcome
- Enhancing the achievement of objectives regarding the treatment of people with chronic disease due to individualised, gender-sensitive supply and promotion of the patient’s own resources
- Modifying the existing daily work in general practice by rendering the content of consultations more structured
- A theory-based and empirically approved module for further medical education, easy to implement in practice, and in a modified form also suitable for academic medical education
- Promoting patient autonomy and GPs' work satisfaction

Involved researchers:
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