

Video Supported Collaboration in Healthcare

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Abstract. Apprenticeship is a traditional way of working and learning in healthcare. Information and knowledge transfer is distributed through informal and/or formal ways. The local "know-how" is distributed to new and old colleagues and provide constant learning among the health care professionals. In this constellation, patients may perceive a greater trust where one healthcare worker's limitations can be bridged by a more experienced colleague in that particular field.

The organisation of healthcare in Norway today is characterized by two levels of health care delivery. Primary (level of GPs) and secondary care (level of consultants). Distance, means of communication and traditions has limited the access for information exchange between the levels. One result has been a higher number of patients being referred to specialist care, and less emphasis on the apprenticeship partnership within the chain of healthcare workers.

In 2009, health care delivery was revised and a closer collaboration between primary and secondary healthcare was advocated by the government. One mean for collaboration was to be supported by ICT. Within this context, a structured collaboration between primary and secondary health care providers was formed within the context of diabetes care. The collaboration was formed by communication between a consultant who was giving advice on complicated patients to a GP or a consultant supporting the communication between a GP and the patient. The communication was performed without physical proximity between primary and secondary health care providers but by means of video conference.

Results: Private economy benefited from this project. The cost for transportation, time spent travelling and charge for doctor's appointment was reduced.

Consultant: Was able to solve problems directly during discussion with the GP and patient and reduced this way the number of patients referred to his practice.

GP: Benefited from the knowledge transfer and support from a more experienced in the field. The collaboration reduced the number of patients referred to secondary care and enabled him to solve more complicated problems locally.

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