

Evidence Brief

Effectiveness of chronic care models: opportunities for improving healthcare practice and health outcomes

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Chronic care models (CCMs) have been developed alongside other strategies to help primary healthcare services manage the substantial impact chronic diseases have on the lives of people. Existing CCMs focus on facilitating community and family support, implementing case management, self-management support, organisational change, delivery system design, decision support and clinical information systems. This systematic review synthesised international evidence on the *effectiveness* of CCM elements for improving healthcare practices and health outcomes.

The majority of papers that assessed effectiveness reported an association between the implementation of two or more of the CCM elements and improvements in either primary healthcare practice or health outcomes for people living with chronic disease.

It was impossible to identify specific elements or combination of elements that led to either improvements in healthcare practice or health outcomes due to the variability across the included studies. Studies that focused on the implementation of self-selected elements across multiple sites also found very little between site differences in either the type or strength of healthcare practice or health outcome improvements.

Factors such as the way in which elements are implemented may also contribute to improvements in healthcare practice and health outcomes.

Recommendations from the Systematic Review

Implementation strategies found to lead to improvements in healthcare practice or health outcomes were:

- ensuring organisational leaders provide clear direction and support any changes to healthcare practices,
- encouraging and providing time for healthcare providers to reflect on how their own practices could improve,
- involving healthcare providers in the implementation, and where possible the development of CCMs; and
- sending clear messages about the importance of chronic disease care.

The importance of contextual relevancy should be recognised and addressed when developing and then implementing CCMs, given that the burden of chronic disease is highest within disadvantaged including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities whose values and beliefs may be different to those of the dominant population.