


Volume 13, 23 October 2013

Publisher: Igitur publishing

URL: <http://www.ijic.org>

Cite this as: Int J Integr Care 2013; Annual Conf Suppl; [URN:NBN:NL:UI:10-1-114703](https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:nl:ui:10-1-114703)

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Poster Abstract

Situation Review of Care Deficits and Management Programs for Multiple Sclerosis in Germany

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Abstract:

Background: The provision of care to chronically ill patients in Germany is regarded as deficient. In order to improve quality of care and to cut costs of chronic care, the German legislator has gradually introduced integrated care programs to the statutory health insurance (SHI) since the beginning of 1990s. According to current estimates, between 120,000 and 180,000 people suffer from the chronic disease multiple sclerosis (MS) in Germany [1]. MS causes a significant economic burden as about one out of three patients is affected by early retirement in consequence of MS [2]. Due to its broad range of neurologic symptoms, MS is characterized by a strong need for interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral care programs. Against this background, it was aim of the study to identify existing deficits in MS care, as the identification of deficits provides the basis for the development of efficient health care structures. In a second step, the study addresses the question whether care management programs for MS exist and how they are designed.

Methods: Initially, a systematic literature review regarding care deficits and management programs for MS was conducted in the medical databases Embase and Scopus. The systematic search was supplemented by further internet search. Currently, expert interviews regarding care deficits are conducted with representatives from e.g. SHI funds, associations of involved professionals and patient organizations. Furthermore, the 40 largest SHI funds in Germany are surveyed by means of a standardized questionnaire regarding the existence of management programs for MS and their content. The empirical analysis is carried out anonymously.

13th international Conference on Integrated Care, Berlin, Germany, April 11-12, 2013

Results: By now, the systematic literature review and the internet search have been completed. Regarding structural deficits, there is evidence of insufficient coordination between different sectors and between different (medical) disciplines. In the diagnostic area, on average 3.5 years pass by until the diagnosis MS is made, although new diagnostic tests and criteria allow a diagnosis within a few months after onset of the disease. With regard to MS therapy, especially disease modifying therapy, it has been ascertained that therapy rate is too low and dropout rate is too high. Symptomatic therapy is insufficiently applied. The empirical analysis is in progress. Responses to the questionnaires are expected by end of January 2013, completion of expert interviews is expected by end of February 2013.

Discussion and conclusion: The literature review revealed the existence of several deficits in MS care. By means of expert interviews this information is supposed to be checked and supplemented. The many deficits already found within the literature review highlight the question, whether SHI funds have developed management programs for MS and whether these programs address the existing deficits. The outstanding survey of SHI funds should give answers to this.

Keywords

multiple sclerosis, care deficits, care management programs, chronic diseases

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