

TUFH conference – Poster

Title: Building trust in a newly-introduced primary health care professional in South Africa

Sub-theme: Building trust in health interactions with the community

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Thematic Poster Sessions restricts the time allotted to format lecture-type presentations and encourages an active role for conference participants. At the conference, contributors and participants will meet in groups of about 40 persons for two-hour sessions. To direct this discussion, a moderator will chair the session. The moderator will invite participants to bring forward their questions and to share experiences pertinent to themes brought up in the posters.

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Context

The impact of the relatively new discipline of family physicians in the African setting requires more evidence. Twenty-two years ago, the South African government embraced the district health services model to ensure equal access to quality primary care in its communities. The bulk of the primary care workforce are nurses, supported by doctors (with no postgraduate training). The potential benefit of an expert generalist with postgraduate training was advocated and nine years ago, family medicine became a registered specialty in South Africa. Five years ago, the first graduates of the new training programmes entered the district health system. However, policy makers, managers and clinicians remain hesitant to embrace this new specialty within the district health services.

Objectives

A EuropeAid-funded research project aims to evaluate the impact of family physicians within the district health services of South Africa. This poster focuses on one of the methods used, an analysis of a national data set of indicators to evaluate the correlation between the supply of family physicians and district health system performance.

Methods

A cross-sectional analysis was done to look for associations between family physician supply and 75 indicators of district performance for the time period of 2014/2015. A further analysis compared two time periods: 2010/2011 (baseline) and 2014/2015 (increase in numbers and duration of effect of family physician supply).

Results

Regression analysis was used to indicate associations and potential effect sizes.

Conclusions

The results of this cross-sectional analysis should be triangulated with the findings from the rest of the study (qualitative, quasi-experimental and survey data). The combined results will be communicated with stakeholders of the district health services (including managers and clients) in order to build trust in this new discipline.