



## Poster 17 – 2018 Nordic Implementation Conference

### The implementation and improvement science perspective on interventions in health care

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#### *Background*

Swedish health care is carrying out a development program on standardized patient pathways in cancer diagnostics. A follow up research study was conducted from an implementation science perspective with the aim to understand the enabling and hindering factors and describe anticipated effects. The results have shown that the study would benefit from an improvement science perspective.

#### *Project aim*

Implementation science is frequently used to evaluate interventions in health care. Different interventions though, require different theoretical perspectives. By using the example of standardized patient pathways, we exemplify how implementation and improvement science focus on different aspects in interventions and thereby lead to different results. The purpose of the paper is to discuss the different perspectives of implementation and improvement science on interventions in health care. We aim to contribute to the knowledge of when one perspective is preferred over other.

#### *Project methods*

Based on the implementation framework of Nilsen, Roback and Krevers (2010) a case study was conducted in one county council in Sweden. The study focused on gaining knowledge of the determinants such as implementation object, end-users, users, context and implementation strategies of the implementation and anticipated effects. The primary data collection methods included interviews with health care professionals and document studies. In this paper the empirical data is analysed from an improvement science perspective to point to new aspects which are important for this kind of interventions

#### *Project Results*

The improvement program of standardized patient pathways is a complex organizational intervention. This implies that the changes are emergent and dynamic and formed by ongoing learning and adaptation of improvements. The implementation object itself is open and needs to be fitted to the context of the health care organization. The primary goal of implementation science is to identify the enabling factors and accumulate knowledge for future effective implementation of future interventions. In contrast, the goal of improvement science is to facilitate the ongoing change process.

#### *Preliminary or final conclusions/discussion*

The perspective of implementation science is preferred when the nature of the intervention is closed and the change process can be planned and controlled. In contrast, complex organizational interventions may benefit from improvement science that focuses more on how the ongoing change process can be formed and facilitated. Implementation science also primarily contributes to generalizable knowledge for future interventions whereas improvement science contributes more to the ongoing intervention.