

Community physician perspectives on an autism learning health network: a qualitative study

Presenter: Josie Kearney

BACKGROUND

- Autism is highly prevalent, yet no single care centre has enough data for broad healthcare insights
- Learning health networks (LHNs), like the Autism Care Network (ACNet) address this gap by integrating clinical and research data cross several sites
- These collaborative efforts among care centers ultimately enhance healthcare outcomes
- Expanding LHNs into the community is essential, especially in autism care, as most patients receive care in this setting

OBJECTIVES

1. Understand the current data collection practices, learning needs, capacity, and overall interest of community providers in participating in an autism LHN
2. Identify community providers' perspectives on the benefits and disadvantages of participating in a LHN and ways in which their engagement and interest in a LHN can be cultivated

METHODS

1. Participants were recruited with purposive sampling
2. Participants were community physicians who had previously participated in autism-focused educational programming.
3. In-depth structured interviews were conducted across three sites: Ontario, Alberta, and Missouri.
4. Data were analyzed using an interpretative phenomenological analysis

RESULTS

Analysis of 29 interviews identified five primary themes across three interview sites.

1. **Navigating Administrative Challenges** – the barriers that impact providers' ability to provide optimal care and potentially participate in an LHN
2. **Improving Data Collection Practices** – the lack of consistent information collection from patients and desire for a comprehensive standardized tool
3. **Increasing Provider Confidence and Competence** – the challenges of navigating the everchanging landscape of autism care as an individual community provider
4. **Breaking Down Silos** – the difficulties associated with fragmented care and lack of communication between various aspects of the healthcare system
5. **System and Societal Barriers to Achieving Best Practices** – the systemic barriers that exist for both physicians and families and ultimately impact equitable and best practice autism care in the community.

There are 5 key themes that need to be addressed by learning health networks to improve community autism care:

Increasing Provider Confidence and Competence

Improving Data Collection Practices

Breaking Down Silos

Navigating Administrative Burden

System and Societal Barriers



IMPLICATIONS

- Our findings highlight the key challenges community providers face when delivering autism care in the community
- LHNs can effectively address each of the primary 5 themes highlighted
- LHNs can play an important role in improving healthcare efficacy and outcomes in diverse healthcare fields

LIMITATIONS

- Despite including multiple sites in this study, specific regional contexts and healthcare structures might introduce nuances that are not represented in this study



Scan to read the full abstract

Josie Kearney, Catherine Bosyj, Victoria Rombos, Melanie Penner



Holland Bloorview
Kids Rehabilitation Hospital

