



## INTERDISCIPLINARY INTEGRATION: MAXIMIZING HEALTHCARE IMPACT ACROSS SPECIALTIES

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### Abstract

In order to provide patient services, a complicated procedure called multidisciplinary teamwork brings together a range of medical professionals to work together and share knowledge, abilities, and experience. Empirical studies indicate that interdisciplinary teams are critical to achieving a multitude of benefits, such as optimal resource allocation, decreased superfluous spending, improved organizational and individual learning and development, improved job performance and quality, and more successful outcomes for patients and their families. Patients whose health care demands are complicated by major medical and psychological issues, referred to as complex care recipients are those with several chronic diseases and co-occurring physical and mental health issues. The study's goal was to determine the various kinds of interdisciplinary integration and their advantages in the field of healthcare.

**Keywords:** Interdisciplinary, integration, Healthcare, Specialties.

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## Introduction

In order to provide patient services, A complex procedure called multidisciplinary teamwork unites a range of medical specialists in order to cooperate and share knowledge, abilities, and experience. Empirical studies indicate that interdisciplinary teams are critical to achieving a multitude of benefits, such as optimal resource allocation, decreased superfluous spending, improved organizational and individual learning and development, improved job performance and quality, and more successful outcomes for patients and their families. As a result, well-coordinated cooperation both within and between the medical professions is probably going to become more crucial in order to address the problems facing modern health care. Furthermore, it was found that health care teams were = more complex than teams in other industries, requiring a greater comprehension of team dynamics and procedures. In order to optimize the advantages of multidisciplinary teams, it becomes necessary to develop managerial methods that encourage an interdependent collaborative approach among the professionals in the health care environment (Marsilio et al., 2017).

Patients whose health care demands are complicated by major medical and psychological issues, Complex care is used to describe problems like several chronic illnesses and coexisting mental and physical health issues recipients. 10% of patients have complicated care demands, which accounts for 64% of all medical expenses. These people are a significant contributor to health care costs. A health care delivery paradigm called in order to improve care for elderly people, Geriatric Resources for the Assessment and Care of Elders (GRACE) was established older people with complicated requirements at a lower cost. GRACE was created to act as a support network between the primary care physician (PCP) and patients/caregivers. A team of nurse practitioners and social workers (NP/SWs) conducts thorough, organized assessments in patients' homes as part of the approach. The NP/SWs then collaborate with a broader interdisciplinary team comprising a pharmacist, mental health liaison, and geriatrician. A customized care plan created by the GRACE team based on the patient's goals of care and the result of the initial in-home assessment serves as the foundation for GRACE Team Care (Ritchie et al., 2016).

Using multidisciplinary teams is a fundamental aspect of providing cancer care (MDTs). Bringing a group of medical experts together to decide on a patient's treatment plan is the main purpose of MDT sessions. MDT meetings are commonly

utilized in the healthcare industry, and in the UK, they are officially acknowledged as the recommended method of providing care at the policy level. MDTs play a crucial role in the provision of healthcare in general as well as in the treatment of cancer. This is especially clear from the research on the advantages of interdisciplinary care in fostering relationships between primary care physicians and specialists. The body of research has shown that team-based methods to healthcare delivery can enhance certain facets of the standard of patient care. Additionally, by enhancing comprehension of patients' care plans and the general professional climate, team-based care can help both patients and health workers (Janssen et al., 2018).

## Aim of study

The study aimed to acknowledge the forms of Interdisciplinary integration and the benefits of interdisciplinary integration in healthcare.

## Literature Review

### Forming a Functional Interdisciplinary Team

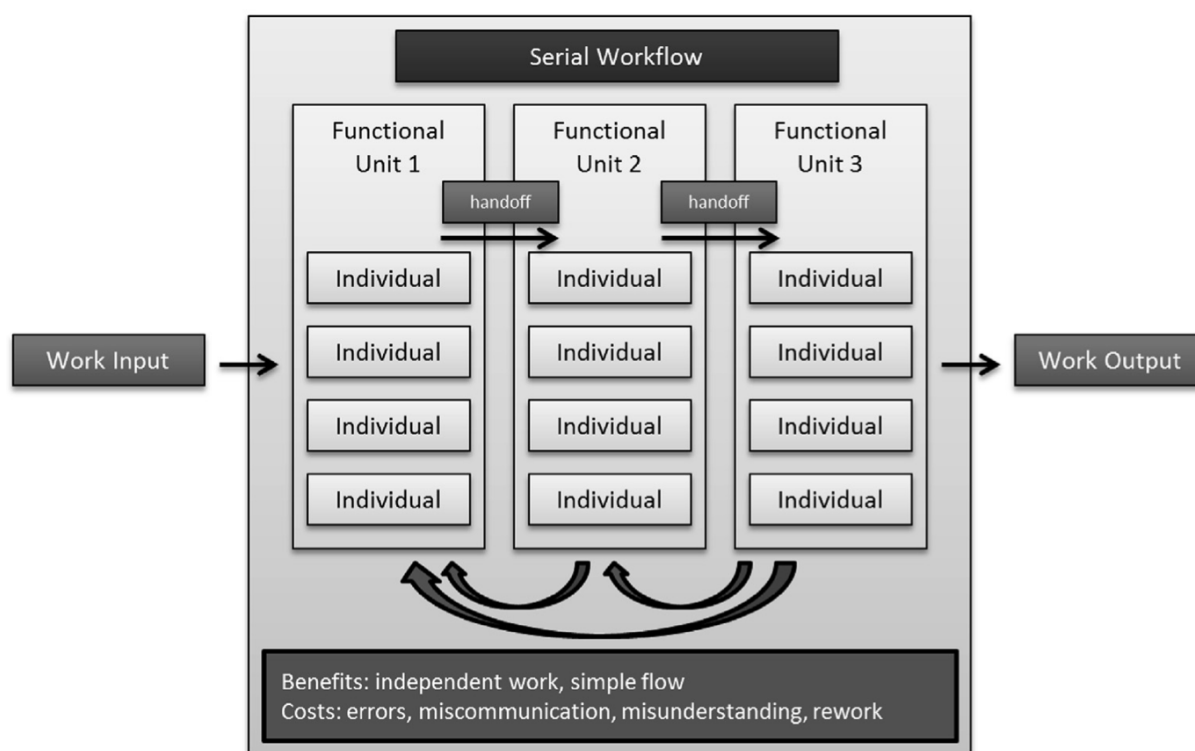
According to psychological research, Forming, storming, norming, and performing are the four phases in the process of creating an effective team. The process of forming is usually marked by ambiguity and confusion. Because they may not know each other well yet, team members may communicate in an impersonal and surface-level way. When disagreements amongst team members start to surface, it's called storming. Although obstacles will inevitably arise from time to time in a collaborative, high-performing team setting, resolving disagreements is essential to moving past them and into the norming and performing phases. The phase known as "Norming" is when the group starts discussing the issue at hand and fosters candid communication amongst participants. This phase contains commonly used protocols and communication styles. In the final stage, performance, the team gives its whole attention to accomplishing the objectives. Now, the group is close-knit, trustworthy, resourceful, and productive. Multidisciplinary, highly effective teams have an impact on patient care in a number of ways: Reducing death: According to a National Institutes of Health study, death rates were lower than expected in units where workers felt that their groups were functioning at advanced phases of group growth. Enhancing patient outcomes and satisfaction: When clinical and non-clinical staff members collaborate effectively, healthcare teams can "improve patient outcomes, prevent medical errors, enhance efficiency, and increase patient satisfaction," according to the American Hospital

Association (AHA). Ensuring the safety of patients and hospital staff: Good teamwork is essential to the establishment and maintenance of a culture of safety for both parties (Erin, 2024).

### Health Care Teams

In today's complicated businesses, there is an increasing need for cross-disciplinary teams to innovate, effect change, and raise the standard and productivity of their work. Public health institutions are under increased pressure to discover more effective and efficient ways to provide high-quality services given the current focus on lowering health care expenditures while raising care quality in Canada. A collaborative strategy involving numerous professionals with their patients in order to deliver top-notch medical treatment. The

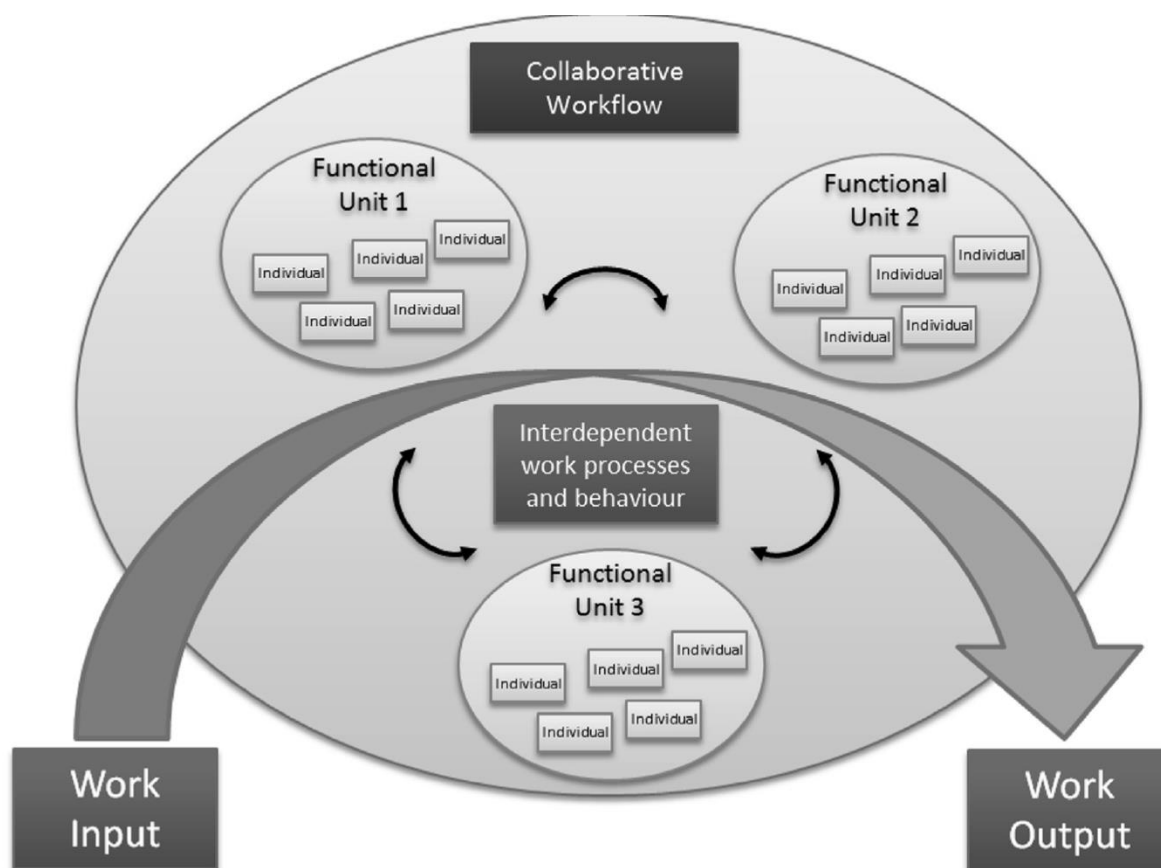
definition of interprofessional collaborative practice is when patients, families, and physicians collaborate, coordinate, and make decisions together. A multifunctional team applies a range of functional knowledge to the task at hand, whether it is for a one-time project or ongoing operational activities. This functional competence can be more subtle when team members have similar experiences and backgrounds but differing points of view; on the other hand, it can be more noticeable when members have different training, experiences, and backgrounds. In an ideal world, members of a multidisciplinary team including patients, families, and other stakeholders would participate in the delivery of healthcare (Orchard et al., 2012).



**Figure 1. A multifunctional team (Morley & Cashell, 2017).**

Comparing multifunctional teams to solely functional teams, the former can be more efficient, inventive, productive, and skilled at managing risks. This is achieved by offering a platform where a variety of ideas, considerations, and compromises can be talked through and resolved as quickly as possible to avoid costly errors, rework, and miscommunications. This is particularly important

when there may be significant differences in the values and goals of the team members. Each step of multifunctional cooperation benefits from the contributions of numerous team members, even though it involves a variety of essentially different duties and handoffs. Conversely, closely similar team procedures can be regarded as really interprofessional (Larson & Gray, 2014).



**Figure 2. An interdisciplinary team (Morley & Cashell, 2017).**

It could be helpful to consider various levels of team cohesion. On one extreme is a multipurpose team with functional members who are physically and psychologically fragmented. As work is transferred from sub-unit to sub-unit in such a team, there may be little opportunity for knowledge exchange and creativity (Figure 1). On the other side, open, cooperative interdependency, trust, and shared objectives are what bring an interdisciplinary team together. A team like this may still assign tasks to different functional units, but it will have outstanding communication, mutual understanding of the interrelated work process, and joint accountability for the inputs and outputs of the process (Figure 2). The latter group has a higher probability of equitably negotiating a set of common goals and producing the best results according to pre-set standards. Long-term, this kind of team might also be better at process enhancement, capability building, and organizational learning. It is essential to remember that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts (Morley & Cashell, 2017).

### **Fostering critical thinking and collaborative learning skills**

It is widely acknowledged that concepts and tools related to critical thinking are essential to well-organized training. Critical thinking is constantly emphasized by instructors in higher education, particularly in medical education, in all areas of academic study, including information selection, reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Some people believe that the most crucial abilities to master are critical reading and evaluation since they apply to many different areas of cognition. Critical thinking is still a crucial talent to develop in health professions courses since it will enable the student to perform flawlessly in real-world professional situations. This method encourages the formation of new knowledge while also giving the learner the ability to assess what they already know. It should come as no surprise that most health science courses recognize how crucial it is for students to develop critical thinking abilities. Healthcare workers must acquire strong clinical reasoning and acumen in order to provide effective care while ensuring the safety of patients (Sahoo & Mohammed, 2018).

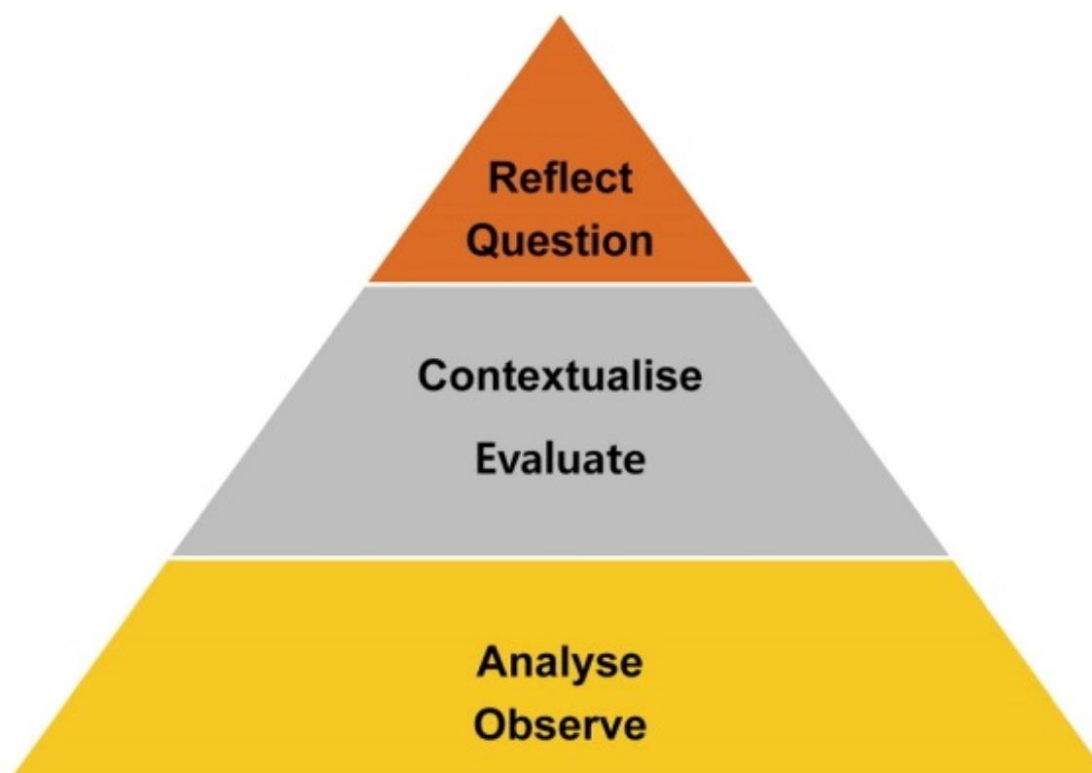


Fig. 1. Steps of Critical Thinking (Sahoo & Mohammed, 2018).

### Interprofessional Education

Healthcare educators feel that Interprofessional Education (IPE), a basic pedagogical strategy, is necessary to provide safe, excellent, and optimal patient care. Integrated practice education (IPE) brings together two or more healthcare professionals in an effort to foster collaboration and improve health. IPE promotes interprofessional collaboration (IPC), which is widely recognized for promoting a collaborative team approach that results in improved patient outcomes, reduced hospital stays, decreased expenses, and a decrease in medical errors. Furthermore, studies demonstrated that the use of IPC leads to better clinical outcomes for patients as well as higher levels of patient satisfaction (Asmirajanti et al., 2018).

In contrast, IPC is a procedure where a number of people with various backgrounds work together to provide their patients with the best care possible. Researchers found that collaboration and teamwork among healthcare professionals are essential for improving healthcare outcomes for patients in intensive care units. According to the Committee on Quality Health Care in America, interdisciplinary training opportunities are vital to reinventing healthcare, with a larger emphasis on evidence-based practice (Zechariah et al., 2019).

### Care Pathways and Protocols

Systematically created statements to aid practitioner and patient judgments regarding

appropriate healthcare for specific clinical settings is the definition of clinical guidelines. Guidelines constitute an essential component of an evidence-based practice toolkit, serving as a readily available source of properly synthesized and analysed evidence by qualified physicians and methodologists. When converted into practice recommendations, guidelines can enhance patient outcomes and the care process. More adherence to standards, for instance, has been linked to better and faster outcomes in patients with psychiatric illnesses, lower rates of low back pain treatment utilization, and reduced morbidity following appendectomy for severe appendicitis (Pereira et al., 2022).

### Research Collaborations

Healthcare organizations are intricate and need a high level of knowledge, and patients frequently assume that the best diagnosis and treatment options are chosen by the healthcare professionals. Clinical care employs the finest available knowledge in a methodical manner thanks to evidence-based medicine and practice. However, there is a known and acknowledged disparity between healthcare practice and research, and the failure to convert research findings into useful interventions leads to disparities in health. It can take a while for knowledge generated by research to be applied in clinical settings. Thirty to forty percent Some patients might not receive therapy that is in line with the findings of current research,

according to estimates of the inadequate use of research in the Netherlands and the United States. Evidence-based clinical practice guidelines need to be adopted more quickly, as has been stated often, and the elements that affect this adoption have been well researched. It is acknowledged worldwide that obtaining research on healthcare policy and practice is important (Uzochukwu et al., 2016). Research on knowledge transfer and exchange explains the interactive sharing of knowledge between researchers. Researchers and practitioners can engage in knowledge transfer and exchange interactions from the beginning of the research process, involving longer-term connections. There have been several ways to knowledge transfer discussed, with some emphasizing methodical synthesis and recommendations, social interaction between decision-makers and researchers, contextual factors, and organizational preparedness, among other things (Nyström et al., 2018).

### The benefits of interdisciplinary integration in healthcare

Through continued cooperative collaborations, integrated care aims to overcome fragmented care and better coordinate health and social services around the needs of the individual. There are numerous ways to provide integrated care. It can happen, for instance, when healthcare providers operate at separate levels (vertical integration) or the same level (horizontal integration), as when general practitioners and acute hospitals are connected (Charles et al., 2018).

Integrated care typologies include systemic, organizational, and clinical integration, for instance. Coherence of regulations and policies across all organizational levels is a requirement of systemic integration. Clinical integration describes procedures that are used within or between professions using common protocols and principles. Coordination of provider networks or contracts that unite disparate organizations is referred to as organizational integration. The procedures of uniting organizations and experts in order to improve patient outcomes, such as the experience of patients and the standard of care given, are the focus of all degrees of integration (Liljas et al., 2019).

### Conclusion

An innovative and cohesive interprofessional team promotes staff and patient participation, safe and excellent care delivery, and organizational creativity and efficiency. Researching this intricate area of organizational behaviour could be gratifying and demanding. According to the

research, fostering collaborative practice requires a variety of factors, including the provision of structural and physical opportunities, a psychologically safe environment, and the right kind of instruction and training.

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