

Implementation of a scaling-up strategy: reaching more people benefiting from integrated care programs

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Why do we want to evaluate a scaling-up strategy for integrated care?

Integrated care initiatives are being developed around the world to drive forward transformation of health systems to achieve accessible, quality, effective and sustainable health care. To ensure that more people will benefit from successful integrated care, scaling-up is recommended. However, there is a lack of insight into what factors contribute to the progress and success of integrated care initiatives and how initiatives themselves can be scaled-up. This study evaluates the implementation of a scaling-up strategy which is used by a European project entitled SCaling IntegRated Care in Context (SCIROCCO).

Study objective

To obtain an understanding of how the SCIROCCO scaling-up strategy in the context of several European regions is being implemented.

SCIROCCO's scaling-up strategy

SCIROCCO's scaling-up strategy is about exploring what to scale-up, and how to scale-up integrated care initiatives and includes the following steps:

Step 1: Five participating European regions will assess their maturity in the provision of integrated by using the new developed SCIROCCO tool (Figure 1). The outcome of the assessment is a 'radar diagram' which presents areas of strengths and weakness in each dimension of the tool (Figure 2).

Step 2: SCIROCCO will facilitate the comparison of the radar diagrams and will match regions with complementary strengths and weaknesses.

Step 3: SCIROCCO will organise twinning and coaching sessions between the matched regions in order to promote knowledge exchange and to facilitate scaling-up.

Figure 2 Radar diagram of SCIROCCO tool



Figure 1 The SCIROCCO tool



How do we evaluate the scaling-up strategy in integrated care?

Implementation fidelity assessment

To explore what factors influence the implementation of the SCIROCCO scaling-up strategy, an implementation fidelity assessment is performed. An extended version of conceptual framework for implementation fidelity (Figure 3) is being used to evaluate what mechanism and factors influence the implementation of the strategy.

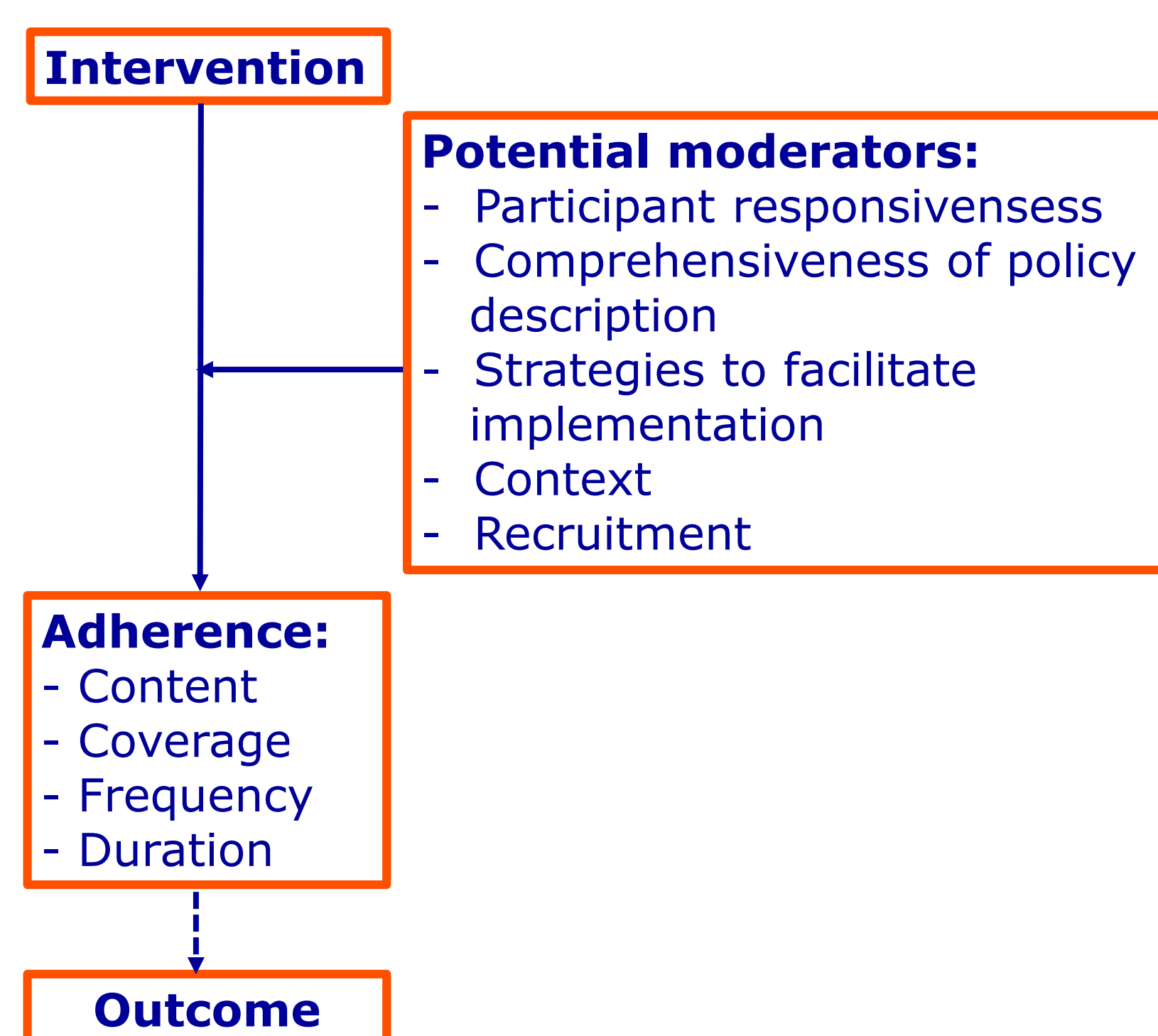


Figure 3 Assessment of fidelity and moderating factors in the present study in accordance to the modified version (Hasson et al.) of The Conceptual Framework for Implementation Fidelity (Carroll et al.).

Data are being collected in five participating European region during the intervention period (April 2016-November 2018). Data collection methods include: key informant interviews, questionnaire studies, and project documents.

Realist evaluation

Realist evaluation will be used to explore what it is about the SCIROCCO's approach that works for whom, why, how and in which circumstances. Interviews will be conducted with members of the SCIROCCO project and participants involved in the participating regions. Furthermore, we will collect work documents used during the implementation of the SCIROCCO activities. The Realist Evaluation framework developed for the study will be used for the analysis to identify specific contexts; the pre-planned and emergent SCIROCCO activities and unidentified occurrences as mechanisms; and a range of (un)expected outcomes.

Measurement of knowledge transfer

To be able to explore what knowledge about integrated care is being shared between health care regions involved in SCIROCCO's strategy to support the implementation and scaling-up of integrated care, knowledge transfer between the regions is measured. For this assessment, we are using a quick scan based on the validated Development Model for Integrated Care (DMIC) (Minkman et al.). Stakeholders identified in the participating regions will be invited to fill out the online DMIC survey at baseline and one follow-up moment after the twinning and coaching sessions.

Scoping review

A scoping review is conducted to explore what scaling-up strategies for integrated care initiatives are described in literature and to what extent these are theory-based.

Current state of the project

As of August 2016, a literature review and Delphi study were performed to test the content-validity of the tool [1]. The self-assessment processes in the five regions is completed (June 2017- November 2017). The process for the matching of regions and the twinning and coaching sessions are currently being designed and planned within the Consortium.

What are the expected lessons?

This study will evaluate a scaling-up strategy by using implementation fidelity assessment and realist evaluation, two approaches which are sensitive to the context of the implementation. These methods will ensure a useful approach to obtain insight into what works, and does not work, in the scaling-up strategy for integrated care. These insights could be useful to guide the development, implementation and evaluation of future scaling-up strategies to accelerate the change towards more sustainable health and care systems.

Key points of the evaluation

- The multi-method design of this evaluation study will yield knowledge around what works in implementing and evaluating a scaling-up strategy aimed at the transfer and scaling-up of successful integrated care initiatives.
- Direct involvement as researchers in this EU project is key and provides a unique opportunity to follow the project closely, and to obtain solid cooperation.
- Choices needed to be made regarding the data collection to be feasible to undertake within the project time, which limits the study coverage of all the potential factors influencing the implementation of complex interventions.

Reference

- Grooten, L, Borgermans, L and Vrijhoef, HJM. An Instrument to Measure Maturity of Integrated Care: A First Validation Study. International Journal of Integrated Care, 2018; 18(1): 10, 1-20.