What is the evidence on interventions to manage referral from primary to specialist non-emergency care? A systematic review and logic model synthesis


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Citation

Authors' objectives
This research aimed to conduct an inclusive systematic review and logic model synthesis in order to better understand factors impacting on the effectiveness of interventions targeting referral between primary and secondary medical health care.

Authors' conclusions
The findings highlight the complexity of the referral process and multiple elements that will impact on intervention outcomes and applicability to a local area. Any interventions seeking to change referral practice need to address factors relating to the individual practitioner, the patient and also the situation in which the referral is taking place. These conclusions apply especially to referral management in a UK context where this whole range of factors/issues lies well within the remit of the NHS. This work highlights that intermediate outcomes are important in the referral pathway. It is recommended that researchers include measure of these intermediate outcomes in their evaluation of intervention effectiveness in order to determine where blocks to or facilitators of system-wide impact may be occurring.

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