

“WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?” HEALTH SYSTEM FRUSTRATIONS EXPRESSED BY PATIENTS WITH MULTIMORBIDITY, THEIR CAREGIVERS AND FAMILY PHYSICIANS (PUBLICATION)



ASHLINDER GILL, KERRY KULUSKI, LIISA JAAKKIMAINEN,
GAYATHRI NAGANATHAN, ROSS UPSHUR, WALTER P. WODCHIS

CONTEXT

Patients with multimorbidity typically require input from multiple providers across many care settings. If care is not properly coordinated, the quality of the care experience for patients and their families can be frustrating and harmful. A shift is needed from the current acute-focused model to one that encompasses chronic disease management and support for patients, their caregivers and care providers. To date, there are no studies that compared and explored the challenges experienced by patients with multimorbidity, their informal caregivers and family physicians.

OBJECTIVES

This study aims to explore the challenges experienced by 27 patient-caregiver-family physician triads in an attempt to capture a more fulsome understanding of their health system experience and to illuminate where system improvements are most needed for managing multimorbidity.

METHODS

Eligible participants were recruited by purposive sampling from a family health team within a tertiary academic health centre in Toronto, Ontario. All members of the patient-caregiver-physician team had to agree to participate in order to be included in the study. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 27 patients, their informal caregivers and family physicians. Qualitative description was used to identify key themes in the interview transcripts. Data analysis was conducted simultaneously with data collection until saturation of themes occurred.

FINDINGS

Respondents expressed both system- and patient-level frustrations. System-level frustrations identified by participants included lack of efficient and timely information from healthcare providers and poor communication between care providers. Patient-level frustrations included challenges with managing multiple diseases and symptoms, and adherence to treatment recommendations. The table below outlines each of the system- and patient-level challenges and the participant who identified them.

	System-level challenges					Patient-level challenges		
	Poor communication	Lack of care coordination	Rotation of medical trainees	Long wait times	Access to care	Care management	Lack of adherence	No frustration
Patient	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		
Informal caregiver	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	
Physician	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

CONCLUSIONS

By asking patients, caregivers and family physicians to share their frustrations, the study unveiled important system- and patient-level issues from three critical perspectives. The inclusion of the perspectives of key members of the patient’s circle of care provides triangulation of evidence on issues that can be comprehensively understood and potentially better managed.

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