

Interprofessionality in the DACH-Countries – a Snapshot

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From pioneering initiatives to a global movement...

- In the 1960s North American pioneers in the medical field reflected on how health professionals could be better prepared for working in teams
- WHO made IPE/CP a matter of debate for many decades thus it became a prominent issue on the global healthcare and educational policy agenda
- Since the Millennium IPE/CP became the key to meeting pressing challenges facing modern healthcare systems in many publications of high-ranking bodies
- Since the 1990s the topic is also being addressed in the tertiary education sector, where healthcare professionals traditionally undergo their training
- Research initiatives and institutionalization processes in the tertiary sector are going hand in hand with increasing political legitimacy and more resources

**Interprofessional
Education**

**Collaborative
Practice**

The DACH-Countries

Germany (D), Austria (A) and Switzerland (CH) are a common language and cultural area in Central Europe with nearly 100 Million residents

Social security based full coverage health care systems which are traditionally physician driven and hospital focused with highly hierarchically oriented manners

Physicians, pharmacists, dentists, psychologists are independent professions and regularly educated in universities in separate, research oriented faculties

Other health professions (like Nurses, PT, OT etc.) are subordinate professionals in the great majority still educated in form of a traditional vocational training



Picture Source: <http://www.aclicagliari.it/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/dach.png> / 12.12.2018

What do we know about Interprofessionality in the DACH-countries?

Aim

- Examining various **motivations** for promotion of IPE / CP and the **stakeholders** involved
- Identifying the current level of **political support**, the degree of **institutionalization** and **networking**
- Examining the state of **curriculum reforms**, the role of regulatory bodies and the level of **research activities**

Methods

Explorational study based on a review of the German literature and political or institutional reports as well as on own perceptions of the activities in the three countries

Limitations

Information is not available on all of these aspects in respect of all DACH-countries. Therefore, remarks are restricted to those aspects which are the most clearly evident in each country

Ewers M, Walkenhorst U (2019): Interprofessionalität in den DACH-Ländern – eine Momentaufnahme. In: Ewers M, Paradis E, Herinek D (Hg.): Interprofessionell Lernen, Lehren und Arbeiten. Weinheim: Beltz-Juventa



High-ranking German Health Policy Committees since years have been calling for better collaboration

Former demonstration projects to establish team-based care have shown only low to moderate effects

Fresh impetus from efforts to modernize medical training (i.e. Medical Studies Masterplan 2020)

Science and educational policy committees have contributed to the debate in recent years

Private Robert Bosch Foundation for some time now is championing IPE (political & funding initiatives)

- Continued structural dominance of physicians in health care
- Medicine oriented and in some parts physician driven debate
- Lack of political backing and consolidation of IPE initiatives
- Shifts in professional boundaries are at best still in their infancy
- Academic and research activities still thin on the ground



Calls to action for more collaboration in health care and for modernization of medical training

Some efforts of Nurses, PTs, OTs, etc. to upskill and emancipate themselves (“Academization”)

Various concerted health policy measures and initiatives (Swiss Academy of Medical Sciences)

Some practical projects, reviews of professional regulations, conferences, symposiums and awards

Private CAREUM Foundation engaged in this field (focussing on Nursing and Allied Health Professions)

- Medicine driven debate with some contributions of others
- Silo structures in the higher education sector impede IPE
- Unclear whether IPE is already being incorporated in the curricula
- First institutionalization processes at Swiss Medical Faculties
- Lack of academic debate and of solid research initiatives

Since many years now calls for transformation of health care and for more collaboration / teamwork

Austrian Health Targets do not detail what concrete form political measures are to take and how

Training of Nurses and allied health professions has been revised and shifted to tertiary sector (UoAS)

Transformation of the traditionally medical degree courses into modern, modular, integrated curricula

Some tightly limited IPE-activities at the Universities of Applied Sciences (underneath Medicine)

- Contributions of Medicine to the debate can hardly be identified
- Some initiatives from Nursing and allied Health Professions
- No broad-based, concerted IPE actions or private initiatives
- Lack of academic debate and research about IPE / CP

Conclusion and outlook (1)

- **Similar motivations** in the DACH-Countries, focusing on the pressing demands for more collaborative and team-based health and social care
- While **different stakeholders** are involved, in Germany and Switzerland especially Medicine plays an important role for pushing the debate
- **Political support for IPE** on Federal level especially in Switzerland while the other countries receive little political backing
- **Weak institutionalization** and **little (inter-)national networking** in the context of IPE/CP in all of the three DACH-Countries

Conclusion and outlook (2)

- It is to be assumed, that the **level of curriculum reforms is quite low** in all German-speaking countries; regulatory bodies are seldom involved
- The **level of research activities still remains unsatisfactory** especially compared to pioneer countries in Northern Europe / North America

If the DACH-countries are serious about following international trends in Health Professions Education and Health Care Provision they still have a long way to go. **Germany, Austria and Switzerland will have to significantly strengthen their efforts** to be able to keep step with the global movement for Interprofessional Education and Collaborative Practice.

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