

Background

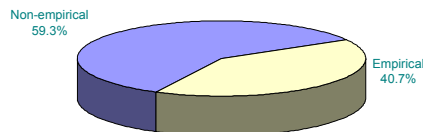
- ❖ Increasing healthcare costs and utilization call for innovation and health systems redesign
- ❖ Integration is seen as a critical step to increase efficiency and quality of care
- ❖ There is little guidance for planners and decision makers on how to plan and implement integrated health systems

Purpose

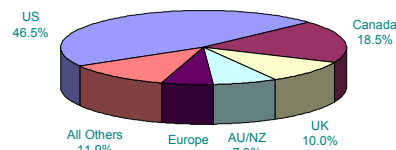
- ❖ Summarize the current research literature on health systems integration with a focus on definitions, processes and impact of integrated health service delivery systems in publicly funded healthcare systems

Methods

- ❖ Health sciences literature databases: Medline, EMBASE, CINAHL, PsychINFO



Empirical vs. Non-empirical



Jurisdictions

Key Findings

General

1. There is no universal definition or concept
2. There are multiple models so no one model that is appropriate for all situations
3. There are ten universal principles of successfully integrated healthcare systems
4. The processes and structures are equally important
5. There is a lack of standardized tools to evaluate integration outcomes

Guidelines to Integration

1. Participation of all stakeholders is essential
2. Primary care and family physicians are major players in the integration of healthcare services
3. Identifying appropriate principles and processes assists with development of a suitable model
4. Indicators and tools to evaluate impact of integration should be an integral part of the process
5. Change takes time, commitment and resources

Special Topics

1. **Physician and primary care integration**
 - ❖ Important to the successful implementation of an integrated health system
 - ❖ Lack of research in publicly funded systems to substantiate perceived benefits to physicians and health systems
2. **Populations in rural or remote areas**
 - ❖ Unique challenges such as geographic distance and isolation
 - ❖ Telemedicine/telehealth are effective tools to improve access and communication
3. **Special populations (Aboriginal, elderly, children/youth, those with chronic diseases, HIV/AIDS, or mental health issues)**
 - ❖ Findings are consistent with general population information; validates their transferability across populations and jurisdictions
 - ❖ Models stress partnerships with patients and communities, a primary healthcare and population-based approach, and the need to be proactive
 - ❖ Integrating services for special population needs and primary care services resulted in positive outcomes at the system, provider and patient level