



# **CIHR Invitational Workshop on Access to Care Research Syntheses**

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# Health Systems Integration – Definitions, Processes and Impact: A Research Synthesis

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## 1. Health sciences literature

- a. Databases: Medline, EMBASE, CINAHL, PsycINFO
- b. Empirical 40.1%; Non-empirical 59.3%
- c. US 46.5%; Canada 18.5%; UK 10.0%;  
AU/NZ 7.3%; Europe 5.8%

## 2. Business literature

- a. Databases: ABI/Inform Global, CBCA, Business Source Premier
- b. Empirical 48.2%; Non-empirical 51.7%
- c. US 43.5%; UK, Europe, AU 13.0% each;  
Canada 8.7%





## 1. No universal definition or concept

- a. Term 'integration' sometimes refers to system level integration and sometimes service delivery integration
- b. Importance of knowing:
  - i. How integration is being defined
  - ii. What is being integrated
  - iii. To what end

## 2. Multiple models - No one model appropriate for all situations





## 3. Ten principles of successfully integrated systems:

- a. Care across the continuum
- b. Patient focus
- c. Geographic coverage and rostering
- d. Standardized care delivery through interprofessional teams
- e. Performance measurement





## 3. Ten principles of successfully integrated systems (cont'd):

- f. Appropriate IT and communication
- g. Organizational culture and leadership
- h. Physician engagement
- i. Strong governance structure
- j. Sound financial management





## 4. Processes and structures are equally important, for example:

- a. Administrative linkages between partners
- b. Shared philosophy statement
- c. Role enhancement





## 5. Lack of standardized tools to evaluate integration outcomes

- a. Few report cost effectiveness particularly in publicly funded systems
- b. Some report positive patient outcomes, for example:
  - i. Reduction in non-emergency cases using ED
  - ii. Shorter average length of stay in hospital





- 1. Participation of all stakeholders is essential**
  - a. Mutual understanding and agreement of conceptual framework and definitions
  - b. Consensus on steps necessary to achieve integration
- 2. Primary care and family physicians are major components of integration**



# Guidelines to Integration



- 3. Identifying appropriate principles and processes assists with development of a suitable model**
- 4. Indicators and tools to evaluate impact of integration should be integral part of the process**
- 5. Change takes time, commitment, resources**





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Summary at:**

**<http://www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/hswru/>**

