

# A collaborative care model enhancing regional outpatient care by General Practitioners

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## Introduction

Since the 1970s, patients in China have demonstrated greater confidence in higher-level hospitals and a lack of satisfaction with General Practitioners (GPs) at Community Health Service Centres (CHSCs). This represents an inefficient use of healthcare resources. The Business-Strict Health Care Collaborative Development Network (a.k.a., Medical Alliance) is composed of Pudong Hospital (affiliated with Fudan University) and 11 surrounding CHSCs. This Medical Alliance was established to provide consistently high-quality community-based primary care; encourage community GPs to also use Pudong Hospital's resources; and create a two-way referral mechanism for a new health care service management model. Therefore, GPs now practice half a day per week at Pudong Hospital to assess and manage presentations of undifferentiated diseases and chronic disease. These GPs collaborate with specialists to diagnose and refer appropriately, so that patients needing to see a specialist may be referred by the GPs rather than by the previous system of disorderly self-referrals. This new collaborative model increases the role of GPs in the healthcare system, leading to greater trust in GPs by patients, more skill development among GPs, and a higher proportion of healthcare being provided by GPs.

## Objective

Our objective is to describe and evaluate this program for its effectiveness in improving primary care provision by GPs.

## Methods

According to the ten steps of a quality control circle, we have performed a plan, do, check, action (PDCA) evaluation of our program. We began with a review of literature and hospital/CHSC management documents to establish baseline values our indicators, including referral rates by diagnosing GPs at CHSCs to specialists at Pudong Hospital, pass rates of GPs over time in their annual exams, access to care, cost, and patient satisfaction. Mixed methods include document review and patient surveys.

## **Results**

Over two years we have completed one PDCA cycle, revealing increased rate of referral coming through CHSC GPs from a baseline 10% to 30%. Additionally, the pass rate of GPs in their annual operational ability assessment has improved from 75% to 92%.

## **Conclusions**

The Medical Alliance' s collaborative model of care has contributed to a more efficient healthcare system in our region by increasing the role of GPs in primary care.