



Review

Facilitators and barriers in the collaboration between the primary care and the sport sector in order to promote physical activity: A systematic literature review

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ABSTRACT

Introduction. The aim of this review was to identify collaborative initiatives between the primary care and the sport sector in order to promote physical activity (PA), and barriers and facilitators in these initiatives.

Method. Pubmed, SportDiscus, Web of Science, and SOCindex were systematically searched for publications published between 2000 and June 2014. Publications reporting on collaboration between the primary care and the sport sector to promote PA were included. Publications reporting on non-empirical data were excluded, except for study protocols.

Results. The search process yielded 1352 publications. After selection, 40 publications were included. Twenty-eight different initiatives were divided into four forms of collaboration, and two approaches to promote PA were distinguished with different kinds of facilitators and barriers. In the referral of patients, sport professionals' lack of medical knowledge, and health professionals' lack of time, were seen as barriers. In networks to organize activities to promote PA among the community, different shared interests and different cultures were seen as barriers.

Conclusion. This review showed that performance of intersectoral collaboration and the collaboration between both sectors are still unexplored. This review provides a first step towards an insight into collaboration and factors that facilitate or hinder collaboration between these sectors.

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Introduction

To address public health challenges like the increasing number of people with chronic diseases, there is a need to join forces both within the healthcare sector and between the health and other societal sectors, especially because no organisation has the resources, access, and trust relationships to address the wide range of community determinants of public health problems (Granner and Sharpe, 2004; Green et al., 2001; Koelen et al., 2009, 2012). Therefore, intersectoral collaboration – defined as people and organisations from multiple sectors working together for a common purpose – has become an increasingly popular health promotion strategy (Roussos and Fawcett, 2000). Intersectoral collaboration between the healthcare and other societal sectors is expected to have the potential to bring about changes in at least two directions. Firstly, it should lead to the improvement of health determinants and thereby the health of individuals and populations. Secondly, it is expected to increase awareness of the health implications of policy decisions and organisational practice within and among these different sectors (Green et al., 2001).

Intersectoral collaboration is challenging because it means working in a new area or setting, with new people with different backgrounds, interests, and perspectives (Granner and Sharpe, 2004; Koelen et al., 2012; Lasker et al., 2001). A health broker seems to offer the promise of improving intersectoral collaboration (Harting et al., 2011). In 2012, the Dutch Ministry of Health, Welfare, and Sport introduced neighbourhood sport coaches (in Dutch *Buurtsportcoach*) – to whom a broker role has been ascribed – to stimulate physical activity (PA) and connect the sport sector with other sectors. The sport sector covers all PA services in the neighbourhood, i.e. sport clubs, fitness centres, PA lessons at community centres. Some of these coaches, the so-called Care Sport Connectors (CSCs), are employed specifically to connect the primary care and the sport sector in order to guide primary care patients towards local sport facilities. Recent years several studies about PA promotion have been conducted in the primary care setting. Reviews provided an overview of the effect of PA or PA promotion on health outcomes (Chimen et al., 2012; Pavey et al., 2013; Semlitsch et al., 2013; Vaes et al., 2013), the effectiveness of PA promotion based in primary care (Lawlor and Hanratty, 2001; Neidrick et al., 2012; Orrow et al., 2012; Sanchez et al., 2015; Stevens et al., 2014; Vuori et al., 2013), and the perceptions of primary care providers on PA promotion (Hebert et al., 2012; Hinrichs and Brach, 2012). In addition, reviews considering intersectoral collaboration in the field of health promotion provided an overview of the effectiveness of partnerships for improving community health (Roussos and Fawcett, 2000; Zakocs and Edwards, 2006). However, no review specifically addresses intersectoral collaboration between the primary care and the sport sector. Research indicates differences between both sectors that influence collaboration, such as culture, target groups, and way of working (Casey et al., 2009a; den Hartog et al., 2014). However, an overview of barriers to, and facilitators of, this intersectoral collaboration between the primary care and the sport sector is – to our knowledge – not available. CSCs may find it useful to have an overview of initiatives and barriers and facilitators in collaborations between the primary care and the sport sector so that they can facilitate collaboration between these sectors and guide primary care patients towards local sport facilities. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to: 1) document and describe collaborative initiatives between the primary care and the sport sector to promote PA, and 2) identify barriers and facilitators in these collaborative initiatives.

Method

Search strategy

To search for literature on collaboration initiatives between the primary care and the sport sector, a literature search was conducted in Pubmed, SportDiscus, Web of Science, and SOCindex. These databases were systematically searched for original research published in English, Dutch, or German between January 2000 and June 2014. These databases were selected to cover medical and health-related literature from Pubmed and sport-related literature from SportDiscus. Web of Science and SOCindex were searched to cover more general literature about the topic of this review. The time span (2000–2014) was chosen to assess recent evidence on collaboration between the primary care and the sport sector, in particular because intersectoral collaboration has become popular as a health promotion strategy since the start of the 21st century (Roussos and Fawcett, 2000). The search strategy combined the concepts: 1) collaboration, 2) primary care, 3) sport sector, and 4) promote PA. Each of these concepts is operationalised in more detail below. The complete search strategy is shown in Table 1.

Collaboration

Because of the variety in strategies for, and definitions of, collaboration, Himmelman's (Himmelman, 2002) categorisation of collaboration and synonyms for (intersectoral) collaboration were used to operationalise the concept 'collaboration'. 'Broker' was added because of its promising role in facilitating intersectoral collaboration.

Primary care

Primary care was operationalised by using synonyms for primary care. Actors representing the primary care sector were added as search terms, as also health/lifestyle in combination with intervention/programme, because primary care professionals are often involved in the implementation of these programmes or interventions.

Sport sector

The sport sector was operationalised with synonyms for sport and combined with actors representing the sport sector.

Promote PA

Promote PA was operationalised with synonyms for the concept 'promote' and combined with synonyms for the concept 'physical activity'.

Table 1
Search strategy for the present review.

Concepts	Search
Collaboration	(collaborat* OR network* OR coordinat* OR cooperat* OR intersector* OR inter-sector* OR partnership* OR allianc* OR multisector* OR multi-sector* OR broker*)
Primary care	("primary care" OR "public health" OR "health sector" OR "general pract*" OR GP OR physician OR dietician OR physiotherapist OR "family pract*" OR "health professional*" OR "health intervention*" OR "health program*" OR "lifestyle program*" OR "lifestyle intervention*")
Sport sector	((sport OR sports OR physical activity or exercise) AND (sector OR club* OR organi?ation* OR professional* OR facility OR facilities OR provider* OR organized OR non-organized OR counsellor* OR service*))
Promote physical activity	((promot* OR improv* OR stimulat* OR increas*) AND ("physical activity" OR sport OR sports OR exercise OR "active lifestyle"))
Other	AND Language = (English OR Dutch OR German) AND Document Type = NOT(review OR editorial OR conference abstracts OR book OR theoretical arguments) AND NOT(developing countries)

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