

Title: Primary Health Care Challenges and the Chronic Care Model in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

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Introduction and Objective

Abu Dhabi is the capital of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and the largest emirate in terms of land mass and population. This emirate has three different geographical regions: Abu Dhabi (Central Capital District), Al Ain (Eastern Region), and Al Gharbia (Western region). Since 2007, the health system has been regulated by the Health Authority – Abu Dhabi (HAAD) and the Abu Dhabi Health Services Company (SEHA) has been the service provider in all governmental health facilities. The UAE has a high population-burden of morbidity and mortality related to non-communicable chronic diseases (NCD). The Chronic Care Model (CCM) and the Patient-Centered Model Homes (PCMH) are frameworks for improving chronic illness care at the individual and population level.

Objectives

The aim of this paper was to characterize primary health care (PHC) centers in Abu Dhabi and to analyze whether their goals are aligned with the CCM.

Method

Official published data from HAAD, SEHA, and the UAE Ministry of Health was analyzed using CCM as a framework to assess the PHC services and to identify potential opportunities for improvement.

Results

There are 38 SEHA Ambulatory Healthcare Services (AHS) Centers that provide Primary Health Care (PHC) with 20 located in the Eastern Region and 18 in the Central Capital



District. SEHA adopted the PCMH principles that have the same base of care as the CCM. Specifically, the PCMH purposes that team-based care can enhance the support and health outcomes of individuals with NCDs. However, it is integral to fully implement team-based care to move to the CCM and to become a PCMH. The implementation of the CCM elements aligns with PCMH standards and is positively associated with the use of interventions targeting major NCD risk behaviors. The CCM also has beneficial effects on clinical outcomes and processes of care and should continue to inform systematic efforts to improve care.

Conclusions

The Abu Dhabi emirate health system is internationally well-positioned and performing well when benchmarked against developed countries. The adoption of the PCMH was undoubtedly a strategic choice and the model seems to be aligned with the CCM.

Keywords: Health Systems Plans; Primary Health Care; Chronic Care Model; United Arab Emirates; Abu Dhabi Emirate