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Title

Transitioning from Pediatric to Adult Healthcare: Exploring the Practices and Experiences of Care Providers

Priority 1 (Research Category)

Child and adolescent health

Presenters

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Abstract

Context: Youth with complex care needs (CCN) experience complex health conditions, many of which were once seen as fatal and are now increasingly associated with survival into adulthood. As a result, more youth are transitioning from pediatric to adult healthcare as they approach adulthood. Current transition practices, when present, are disorganized, resulting in health status deterioration and complications due to unmet needs. Objective: The purpose of this study is to develop a broader understanding of the current transition practices and experiences, as well as recommendations of care providers in the support of youth with CCN as they transition from pediatric to adult healthcare. Study Design: This study uses a qualitative descriptive design. The data collected was analyzed using inductive thematic analysis following the six phases outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). Population Studied: A purposeful sample of 15 primary care providers (PCP), specialists, and subspecialists who support youth in the transition from pediatric to adult healthcare were interviewed using a semi-structured interview guide. Setting: The study spanned the province of New Brunswick and included pediatric providers from the IWK Health Centre in Nova Scotia. Results: The findings from this research demonstrate a shortage of care providers and lack of community services available for youth with CCN who move into adult healthcare services. Specifically, due to the significant amount of primary care pediatricians provide youth during childhood, improved access to PCPs was a recommendation. Moreover, participants indicated that a designated transition coordinator can enhance the transition process for the youth and stakeholders involved in their care. Conclusion: The results of this study can potentially improve transition practices and policies for primary care practice, and guide future research in this area.