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Title

Virtual Care Use: Profiles of Physician Motivation and Differences in Workplace Need Fulfillment

Priority 1 (Research Category)

Healthcare Services, Delivery, and Financing

Presenters

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Abstract

Context: Physicians appear to vary in their motivation towards using virtual care, but to what extent remains unclear. According to self-determination theory (SDT), people's motivation towards tasks or activities can be autonomous, controlled, or both, resulting in groups of individuals with differences in engagement, performance, and wellbeing. A better understanding of physicians' motivation to use virtual care is therefore needed to help optimize its integration into standard medical practice. Objectives: Guided by SDT, we aimed to determine: (a) if there were indeed distinct groups of physicians based on their motivation towards using virtual care, and if so, (b) how these groups differed in the fulfillment of three basic psychological needs at work – autonomy (i.e., volition), competence (i.e., mastery), and relatedness (i.e., connectedness). Study Design, Setting, & Population Studied: We collected quantitative survey data from a cross-section of 156 family physicians (FPs; 71% female; 61% <50 years) in a large Canadian province. Instrument/Outcome Measures: The online survey included demographic questions and scales for measuring types of motivation towards using virtual care and basic psychological need satisfaction/frustration at work. Analyses: Cluster analysis and analysis of variance were used to explore profiles of physician motivation towards using virtual care and how each profile differed in workplace need fulfillment, respectively. Results: Three higher-order profiles of physician motivation towards using virtual care were identified – ambivalent (66% of FPs), autonomous (19% of FPs), and controlled (16% of FPs) – each of which differed significantly in the degree of need fulfillment at work. Results also revealed that male FPs reported more virtual care use and lower relatedness satisfaction at work, compared to female FPs, and that years in practice was positively associated with autonomous motivation towards using virtual care. Conclusions: This study identifies predominant motivation profiles that FPs currently fit into in using virtual care. Findings suggest that basic psychological needs are fundamental nutrients for FPs to internalize and endorse the value of using virtual care in their practice.