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Transitional patient safety: characteristics of transitional incidents, solutions and challenges

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Background: Transitional care has been widely recognized as an aspect of health care that has an inherent increased risk for patient safety. Hospital discharge, medication continuity and referrals have been identified as high-risk scenarios. A transitional incident can be defined as an unintentional event in patient care between primary care and hospital that has harmed, could have harmed, or (still) can harm a patient. Important causes are inaccurate, delayed or absent communication and coordination between general practitioners and hospital as well as logistic, administrative and IT problems.

Aim: This workshop will present reported transitional incidents in the Netherlands, followed by an analysis of the underlying causes and mitigating factors to identify their characteristics and a discussion of possible solutions and challenges. This is followed by an engaged discussion on the differences in transitional patient safety between countries and their approaches to improve this aspect of health care. We will conclude with various suggestions to improve transitional patient safety, which can be tailored to the own specific characteristics of each health care system.

Organization: Plenary, interactive presentations, discussion and exercises in small groups will be the didactics of this workshop.

Learning Objectives: At the end of the workshop participants will have knowledge about:

- Transitional patient safety in The Netherlands
- Causes, mitigating factors, characteristics and main risks of transitional incidents
- Different approaches to manage and improve transitional patient safety in their own health care system.

Expected impact on daily practice: We expect that the workshop will augment the knowledge of transitional patient safety in general. After this workshop participants are able to identify the causes, mitigating factors and main risks of transitional incidents and will have increased awareness about both their actual and potential harm. We hope to engage them in improvement activities in their own communication and coordination with hospital staff in their country to enhance transitional patient safety.