

## **A perfect harmony or out-of-tune? The collaboration between Internists and Emergency Physicians**

### Start aspect

As this call for a research grant aims to stimulate junior investigators to execute a novel research project within acute internal medicine, this proposal meets these points, because:

- The proposed project focuses on the collaboration between Emergency Physicians (EPs) and internists (acute medicine) in the Netherlands, which –to our knowledge– has not been evaluated before.
- In addition, last year a discussion about collaboration versus rivalry between EPs and internal medicine physicians was started on social media, due to a column in the magazine of the Netherlands Association of Internal Medicine. In our opinion, this shows the actuality of the subject and potential societal relevance of evaluating the collaboration between EPs and internists.
- The coordinating investigator and leader of the project is a fellow acute medicine and PhD student acute medicine.

This qualitative study can be the start of future (quantitative) research, evaluating outcomes of acute care for internal medicine patients and the influence of the perceived collaboration between EPs and internists.

### Background/relevance

In the Netherlands, both EPs and (acute) internists take care of acute medical patients at the Emergency Department (ED). Roles and working agreements of EPs and internists differ nationally. A recent study of Kremers et al. showed that the perceived quality of collaboration between internists and EPs, as graded by internists, differs between 1 and 10 with a mean of 7.4/10. Unfortunately, EPs were not asked to grade the collaboration and a qualitative analysis is lacking in this study. However, these results indicate that the interprofessional collaboration between Dutch EPs and internists vary and may be suboptimal in some hospitals. In addition, a recent column published in the magazine of the Netherlands Association of Internal Medicine, showed a quite negative personal opinion of an internist about EPs. This has led to an online discussion about collaboration between internists and EPs and showed different viewpoints about, and experiences in this collaboration.

It is known that poor interprofessional collaboration adversely affects the delivery of health services and patient care and safety. As emergency care is complex and many healthcare professionals are involved in delivering emergency care, we believe it is important to evaluate and optimise interprofessional collaboration. Therefore, the objective of this study is to evaluate the collaboration between Dutch internists and EPs, with the aim of optimising interprofessional collaboration at the ED, by recognising best practices and challenges in actual collaboration. A secondary objective of this study is to evaluate whether the presence of an internist acute medicine influences the qualities of the interprofessional collaboration with EPs.

Hypothesis: interprofessional collaboration exists of several aspects, such as shared goals and vision, responsibility, working agreements and respect. This study will provide insight in relevant aspects of collaboration between EPs and internists and the perceived quality of this collaboration. We hypothesize that hospitals with employed internists acute medicine report different qualities of the interprofessional collaboration between EPs and internists, than hospitals without internists acute medicine. Therefore, differences in reported qualities of collaboration will be inventoried in this study. In addition, this study will provide best practices and challenges in interprofessional collaboration.

Establishing the topic-list



Semi-structured interviews:

- EPs, resident EPs
- Internists (acute medicine), fellows



Transcribing

Coding

Data-analysis



Insight in collaboration:

- Best practices
- Challenges
- Influence of internist acute medicine

