Interventions to improve teamwork and wellbeing in primary care settings: a mixed method review

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Background:
General practices are experiencing increasing pressures due to rising demand, declining staff numbers, and knock-on impacts on patient care. The COVID-19 pandemic has added further challenges and reinforced the importance of teamwork and organisational settings. We undertook a mixed-method systematic review to explore which interventions can improve teamwork within primary care and improve inter-sector partnerships with other health and social care services.

Methods:
Five major bibliographic databases were systematically searched for relevant studies from inception to February 2022. We included controlled intervention study designs and linked qualitative studies. For amenable data, meta-analysis is being undertaken using random effects models taking into account the between study heterogeneity (quantified using the I² statistic) and potential publication bias (funnel plots and Egger’s test). The qualitative studies are analysed using thematic analyses.

Results:
The original search yield of 3012 studies, of which 14 studies with 1,534 participants were include in our analyses. Most of the evaluated interventions focused on improving non-technical skills and provided evidence of improvements in the quality of teamwork in primary care. Meta-analysis and narrative synthesis is undertaken to examine the impact of the teamwork interventions on staff outcomes (team attitudes, knowledge, and functioning; wellbeing), and patient outcomes (e.g. quality of patient care, patient satisfaction/experience).

Conclusions:
The findings provide information of immediate importance for the mental health and wellbeing and teamwork support of professionals entering primary care and for the organisation of primary care services.