

# **An Examination of Specialists Within FHTs in the Greater Toronto Area**



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# **Background on Family Physician & Specialist Collaboration**

Examination of Specialists within FHTs in the Greater Toronto Area (The “SWiFT Study”)

“Success Stories” & “Lessons Learned”

Open Discussion, Q&A

# Background

Collaboration between family physicians & other specialists is critically important to the care of many patients<sup>1</sup>

1. Cook et al. Gaps in the continuity of care and progress on patient safety. *BMJ* 2000;320(7237):791-4.

# Background

Traditional work flow of consultation process is suboptimal.<sup>1</sup>

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Commentary

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## Rethinking the consultation process

*Optimizing collaboration between primary care physicians and specialists*

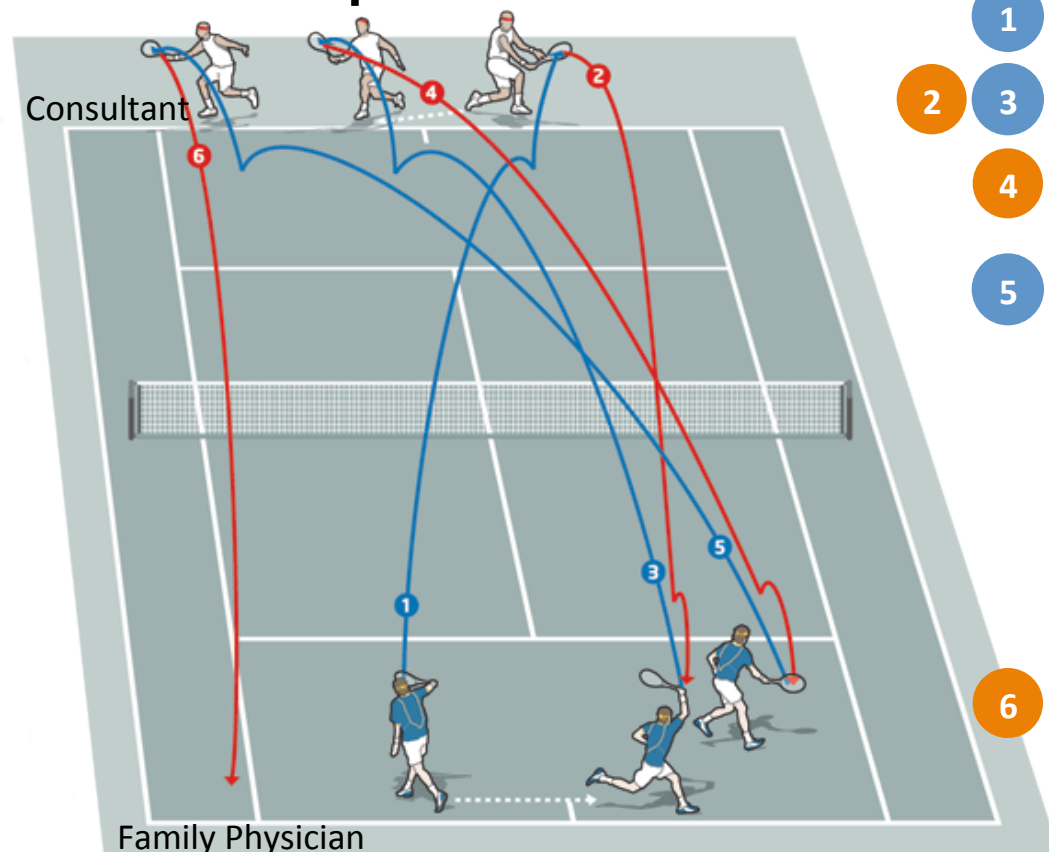
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1. Frost et al. Rethinking the consultation process: optimizing collaboration between primary care physicians and specialists. *Canadian Family Physician* 2012;58:825-8.

# Background

Traditional work flow of consultation process is suboptimal:<sup>1</sup>



- 1 Referral Form
- 2 Clarification or more info requested
- 3 Appointment info given to FMD office
- 4 FMD office contacts patient with appointment details (FMD staff might be unfamiliar with details of consultant's office)  
→ sends patient to attend specialist appointment (probably unfamiliar office)
- 5 Consult letter (maybe) with plan that may or may not be what the FMD had been seeking

1. Frost et al. Rethinking the consultation process. Canadian Family Physician 2012;58:825-8.

2. Image from The New York Times (<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/08/20/sports/playmagazine/20facing-federer-3.html>)



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Independent high-quality evidence for health care decision making

## **Interventions to improve outpatient referrals from primary care to secondary care (Review)**

### **Types of Studies:**

- RCTs, controlled clinical trials, controlled before & after studies, interrupted time series

### **Outcome Measures:**

- objective provider performance (i.e. quality indicators, patient satisfaction, provider satisfaction)
- patient outcomes

### **Results:**

- 17 studies



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Independent high-quality evidence for health care decision making

## **Interventions to improve outpatient referrals from primary care to secondary care (Review)**

**FINANCIAL arrangements** no particular financial arrangement (capitation, fee-for-service, combination) found to be more effective

**EDUCATIONAL arrangements** beneficial to have specialist-led educational activities on-site (including shared care orthopedics “workshop clinics”)

**ORGANIZATIONAL arrangements** beneficial to have on-site physiotherapy, possibly beneficial to have on-site mental health workers, beneficial to have pre-determined “clinic slots” with orthopedic surgeon

# Trends in the Evidence

Trends & themes in the evidence suggest enhancing capacity of the Primary Care team, including via:

- bringing specialty services **on-site**
- having **pre-arranged clinic slots** with specialists
- involving specialists in **shared care as an educational model**

appears to be beneficial to provider performance and patient outcomes



# Family Health Teams

## *Advancing Family Health Care*

### Sessional Compensation Plan for Specialists

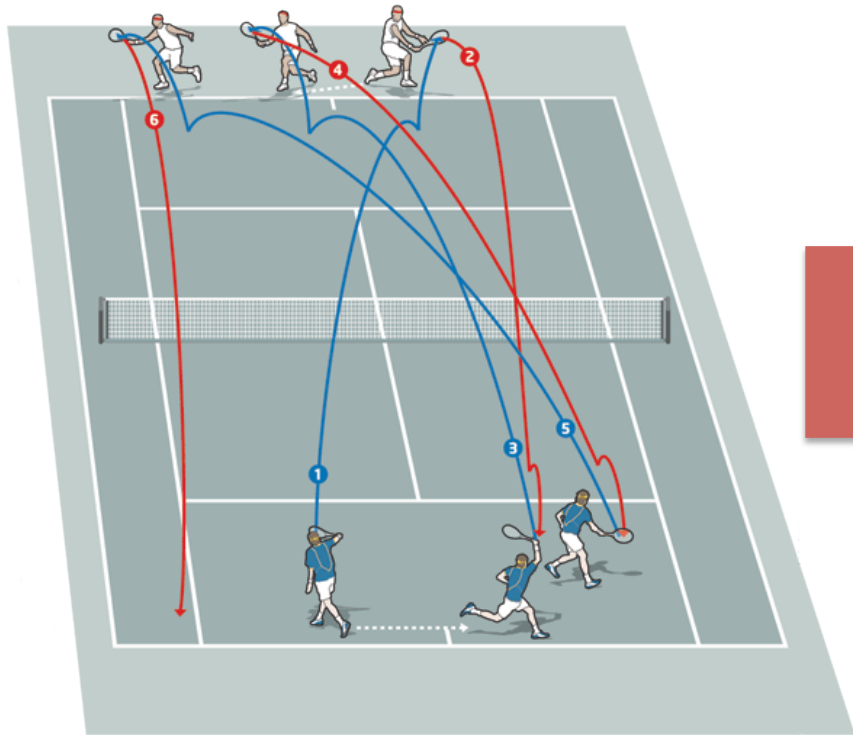
Medical specialists can enhance patient care through the provision of clinical<sup>2</sup> and/or indirect<sup>3</sup> services while visiting a Family Health Team. Eligible medical specialties include geriatrics, internal medicine<sup>4</sup>, paediatrics, and psychiatry (see Table 1).

Specialists are eligible under this plan if they:

- Provide clinical and/or indirect services *at* the Family Health Team site(s);

Family Health Teams are eligible for specialist services under this plan if they:

- Demonstrate a need for these clinical and/or indirect services in their Family Health Team;
- Demonstrate that clinical and indirect specialist services cannot be provided via Telemedicine; and
- Do not qualify for existing Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care specialist sessional programs (e.g. Underserviced Area Program, Visiting Specialist Clinic Program).



Hopefully leading to more patient-centered care...



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[Results of the SWiFT Study]

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[Success Stories & Lessons Learned]

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# Acknowledgments

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- Nelia De Oliveira