The effects of collaboration on efficiency and quality of elderly care among for-profit and nonprofit organizations

Abstract

A large proportion of elderly people, requiring care services, have high cost and quality demands. Increasingly, collaboration is a key factor in improving outcomes in elderly care (McGrath, 1991). However, research analyzing the impact of collaboration on organizational effectiveness such as efficiency and quality of care is scarce. Additionally, previous studies have not focused on the role of ownership (for-profit or nonprofit) or the forms of care service delivery (home care or nursing home) when considering the relationship between collaboration and organizational effectiveness.

This study aims to explore how intra- and inter-organizational collaboration enhances efficiency and quality of care. We will also examine how ownership and care service delivery moderate the relationship between intra- and inter-organizational collaboration and efficiency and quality of care within elderly care organizations. Our approach integrates three theoretical frameworks: a typology of interprofessional work (Reeves, Lewin, Espin, & Zwarenstein, 2011), the Competing Values Framework (CVF) (Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1983; Cameron & Quinn, 2011), and contract failure theory (Hansmann, 1980). Efficiency is assessed by Data Envelopment Analysis (DEA) which is a commonly used tool in a health care setting. Based on Donabedian (1980), our research focuses on the processes relating to quality of care.

Results from the State of Care Work Survey (Kaigo Rodo Jittai Chosa) of 5,929 elderly care organizations in Japan indicated that intra-organizational collaboration in nursing homes had a positive influence on efficiency. Similarly, inter-organizational collaboration with care management organizations led to increased efficiency in home bathing care service. It was also found that intra- and inter-organizational collaboration was significantly and positively related to quality of care. As predicted by contract failure theory, quality of care in nonprofit organizations
was higher than in for-profit organizations in nursing homes and care management organizations, but no significant differences in efficiency were observed between the two. Furthermore, ownership and the various forms of care service delivery were found to moderate the relationship between collaboration and quality of care, such that the positive effect of collaboration on quality of care in nonprofit home care organizations was stronger than in for-profit nursing home organizations.

These findings show that combining three theoretical frameworks is a useful way to understand the effects of collaboration on efficiency and quality of elderly care among for-profit and nonprofit organizations.

**Keyword**

collaboration, efficiency, quality of care, organizational effectiveness, competing values framework