Relational Coordination in Danish General Practice

This PhD dissertation is a product of my PhD project carried out in collaboration between DTU Management Engineering, The Technical University of Denmark, Research Unit for General Practice at University of Southern Denmark, and Research Unit for General Practice at University of Copenhagen. The dissertation presents the research study and a collection of three research papers prepared during the period from May 2010 to June 2014. Relational coordination and organisational social capital are measures of novel aspects of an organisation's performance. Relational coordination analyses the communication and relationship networks through which work is coordinated across functional and organisational boundaries. Previous studies have shown that relational coordination is positively associated with delivery of care for patients with chronic illness. Organisational social capital is used when analysing the psychosocial work environment in organisations, and is seen as a powerful resource for improving organisational performance. Relational coordination and organisational social capital may offer new insight and opportunities for general practice to learn. General practice provides cost-efficient, first-line service and mindful gatekeeping. General practice are faced with a series of growing demands - from many GPs being close to retirement, to the increasing demands for comprehensive management and coordination of patient care. Neither researchers nor politicians have found solutions to overcome the growing demands. This PhD project has measured relational coordination and organisational social capital in Danish general practice. The project found that GP rated relational coordination and organisational social capital in their general practice higher than the secretaries and nurses, and single-handed practices had higher rating of both relational coordination and organisational social capital than cooperative and partnership practices. There was no evidence for an association between relational coordination and patient evaluation of general practice. However, general practice with high ratings of relational coordination was also found to have high productivity.