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Research Article

Strategic Interventions in General Medicine

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Abstract

In general medicine, interventions are divided by their timing and target population. While opportunistic interventions take advantage of a current clinical visit for prevention, strategic interventions are proactively planned for a population group. Strategic interventions are those that are part of a long-term plan; they are systematic, personalized, and proactive action plans to treat, manage, or prevent diseases. In the daily practice of a general practitioner/family physician, these interventions can be grouped into six main categories: **1.** Preventive Interventions (Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary); **2.** Clinical and Curative Interventions (Chronic Management and Rational Use of Medications); **3.** Lifestyle Interventions (Strategic Counseling for Skills Development); **4.** Community Health Interventions (Identification of Social Determinants, Group Education, and Social Prescribing); **5.** Interventions at the Family and Psychosocial level (Strategic Family Therapy, Crisis Management, Strategic Therapy); and **6.** Health Planning and Management Interventions (Integrated Networks, Diagnostic Strategies, Comprehensive Approach, Proactive Management, Personalization and Contextualization). Strategic interventions complement opportunistic interventions and conventional treatment or care, providing a framework for a structured routine that allows for control and rationality in general practitioner consultations.

Keywords: strategic planning; health planning; general practitioner

Introduction

Strategy is the overall plan to achieve a goal; the framework or "map" that guides long-term decisions. Strategic intervention, on the other hand, is a specific and technical action designed to solve a concrete problem or generate rapid change in a system. It is a set of general action programs and resources intended to establish the course and objectives of an organization or individual, evaluating decisions that allow them to be achieved. A strategic intervention is the tactical move to unlock a specific situation.

The concepts of tactics and strategy are often used interchangeably, but they do not mean the same thing. Strategy consists of a general plan, designed to achieve an objective. In this sense, it can be said to be part of a comprehensive vision. In contrast, tactics are a specific movement or action, applied to a particular situation to obtain a specific result. That is, while strategies are comprehensive and general, tactics are singular and specific. Typically, a strategy includes the use of certain types of tactics rather than others. Tactics are subordinate to strategy; that is, without strategy, tactics are meaningless. Tactics seek methods through which strategy can be implemented. Tactics are short-term; strategies are long-term. Frequently, tactics change when circumstances change, but strategy can remain unchanged. Tactics are developed to address the present, unlike strategy, which is designed for the future [1].

In the field of health, an intervention strategy is defined as the coherent set of resources used by a disciplinary or multidisciplinary professional team to carry out tasks in a specific social and socio-cultural context with the aim of producing certain changes [2]. In other words, a strategic intervention in the field of health is a coherent set of actions and resources used by medical professionals to produce specific changes in the well-being of a person or community, with a focus on efficiency, resource optimization, and long-term results [2]. In summary, strategy is the "what" and the "where to," while strategic intervention is the "how to correct" something that isn't working within that plan.

In general medicine, interventions are divided by their timing and target population. Strategic interventions are those that are part of a long-term plan; they are systematic, personalized, and proactive action plans to treat, manage, or prevent diseases. In general medicine and primary care, strategic interventions are a coordinated set of actions and resources designed to produce specific changes in patient health or in the management of healthcare services; they combine clinical diagnosis with resource

optimization, focusing on the patient to improve quality of life quickly and efficiently.

An important element of strategic interventions in general medicine is adding value at the micro level of care. This involves improving knowledge of the patient's context, strengthening the doctor-patient relationship, and integrating community activities from the individual consultation to address biological, psychological, and social problems [3].

In this scenario, a brief conceptualization of strategic interventions in general medicine is presented with the aim of understanding, reflecting upon, and being able to apply such interventions in the daily practice of the general practitioner.

Methodology

This article that is a personal point of view; it aims to reflect on, conceptualize, and propose, based on a selected narrative review and the author's experience, strategic interventions in the field of general practitioner consultation.

Discussion

Strategic interventions in general medicine differ from conventional treatment in their focus on efficiency, resource optimization, and long-term results [2], and from opportunistic interventions primarily in their timing, planning, and population-based approach (**TABLE 1**). While opportunistic interventions take advantage of a current clinical visit for prevention, strategic interventions are proactively planned for a specific population group [4].

Table 1: Comparison of Opportunistic vs. Strategic Interventions in General Medicine.

Characteristic	Opportunistic Intervention	Strategic Intervention
Beginning	During the consultation (taking advantage of the visit)	Scheduled and organized
Population	Individual patient present	Risk groups/target population
Reason (trigger)	Consultation for another reason	Active detection or prevention
Proactive	Reactive (when the patient arrives)	Proactive (patient search)
Objective	Unplanned individual recruitment	Systematic population coverage
Organization	Low/Moderate	High (requires program)
Time	Very brief (30-60 seconds)	Full session or long program
Example	Blood Pressure During a Cold Visit	Mammography Campaign

Both approaches are essential for maximizing early detection and health promotion. These strategies are not mutually exclusive but rather complementary. Opportunistic interventions are an efficient way to reach patients that broader population-based strategies might overlook or who do not participate in organized programs. Both are complementary and fundamental for improving community health: strategic interventions ensure that no one is left out of the system, while opportunistic interventions reach those who do not usually participate in preventive programs on their own initiative.

Strategic interventions are organized and systematic programs aimed at specific population groups to reduce the burden of disease on a large scale. In the daily practice of a general practitioner (or family physician), these interventions are grouped into six main categories:

1. Preventive Interventions (Levels of Prevention)

These aim to anticipate disease or mitigate its effects through five levels of care:

A) Primary Prevention: Routine vaccination programs, smoking cessation counseling, and education on healthy eating; B) Secondary Prevention: Screenings such as Pap smears, fecal occult blood tests, frailty screening in the elderly, individualized monitoring of chronic diseases, and regular blood pressure monitoring to detect pathologies before symptoms appear; C) Tertiary Prevention: Rehabilitation and management of complications in patients already diagnosed with chronic diseases such as diabetes or heart failure.

2. Clinical and Curative Interventions

These focus on the physician's ability to resolve acute or chronic problems: A) Chronicity Management: Use of specific protocols for monitoring patients with multiple conditions, ensuring that treatment is comprehensive and not just a collection of medications. B) Rational Use of Medications: Application of clinical practice guidelines to prescribe only what is necessary, avoiding overmedication and adverse effects.

3. Lifestyle Interventions (Strategic Counseling) [6-8].

The physician acts as an agent of change through counseling or individualized guidance in Skills Development, that is, teaching the patient to self-manage their illness (for example, how to measure glucose levels or use inhalers).

4. Community Health Interventions [9-11]

Actions that go beyond the doctor's office to impact the patient's environment: A) Identification of Social Determinants: Analyzing how housing, employment, or neighborhood affect the patient's health in order to intervene in a comprehensive way; B) Group Education: Talks or workshops on health topics relevant to the local community; C) Social Prescription: Referring the patient to community resources (sports centers, support groups) to combat loneliness or sedentary lifestyle.

5. Interventions at the Family and Psychosocial Level [12-14]

Includes: A) Strategic Family Therapy (Direct tasks are assigned to family members to break harmful behavioral patterns); B) Crisis Management (Tools for the patient to manage the emotional impact of chronic diagnoses or life transitions); C) Strategic Therapy (does not seek the "deep" causes of the problem, since what is considered is not how the problem formed in the past, but how it is maintained in the present. It is more about knowing how than knowing why; that is, it observes how the problem functions within the relational system, focusing on the present interaction and the observable behaviors that maintain the problem. In other words, how the individual has attempted, up to this point, to combat or solve the problem and how it is possible to change this problematic situation in the quickest and most effective way.

6. Health Planning and Management Interventions [15-17]

At the management level, these involve organizing actions in health centers to improve efficiency and access to care. These interventions may include preventive measures, lifestyle changes, or adjustments in therapeutic management to optimize results, often seeking efficient solutions in the management of chronic diseases or complex situations. At the health center level, these interventions optimize the system: A) Integrated Networks: Development of Alliances to ensure that the patient receives continuous care without administrative gaps; B) Diagnostic Strategies: Logical sequence of studies (blood tests, electrocardiograms, x-rays) to identify pathologies quickly and cost-effectively; C) Comprehensive Approach: Involves a coherent set of multidisciplinary resources to generate positive changes in health; D) Proactive Management: Focuses on resolving health problems (physical or emotional) before they worsen; E) Personalization and Contextualization: Each plan is adapted to the specific needs of the patient and their context.

Efficient use of time: behavioral strategies (the primary care physician's ability to manage interruptions, focus on one task at a time, recognize and learn from medical uncertainty, and manage effectively) and communication strategies (the physician-patient relationship, and a patient-centered, exploratory approach).

In summary, unlike isolated treatments, strategic interventions in general practice focus on efficiency and problem-solving through structured plans. These strategic interventions complement opportunistic interventions and conventional treatment or care, providing a framework for a structured routine that allows for control and rationality in general practitioner consultations.

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