

# **Inter-Professional Relationships at Work**

## **Researchers**

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## **Background**

The NHS Plan ([www.nhs.uk/nhsplan](http://www.nhs.uk/nhsplan)) suggests that one of the reasons that the NHS has failed to meet its aims and objectives in the past is due in part to outdated and inappropriate demarcation between professional groups and the roles they perform. The difficulty that healthcare professionals have in co-ordinating their work (busy workload, different working patterns and shifts, different professional objectives), are well documented. Also rigid interpersonal attitudes have been identified as unhelpful to the willingness of the different professional groups to undertake greater inter-professional collaboration. This work looks at the use, deployment and collaboration between different practitioners working in health care settings, focusing on the types of working relationships that the systems of health delivery are likely to cultivate and foster. It would appear that some contexts enhance the formation of collaborative and co-operative working relationships whereas other detract from these.

## **Aims of Study**

- To devise a taxonomy of inter-professional relationships at work,
- To identify the contextual, social and attitudinal factors that make the appearance of one type of working relationship more likely than another
- To explore the implications for the individual, system and organisation of the formation of varying types of working relationship.

## **Methods of Working**

Qualitative methods were used to collect opinions and reflective accounts from health care practitioners, exploring how they carry out their professional roles, dispense care, and work with colleagues. The types, patterns and trends in interaction, collaboration and working relationship that these encourage are represented in diagrammatic form (connate theory) -so that that the way that the diagram looks says something about the way the relationship is.