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[Integrated care: theory to practice](#)

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Summary of publication

Health systems internationally face a common set of challenges: ageing populations, increasing numbers of patients suffering from multiple long-term conditions (multi-morbidity) and severe pressure on health and care budgets. ‘Integrated care’ is pitched as the solution to current health system challenges. But, in the literature, what integrated care actually involves is complex and contested. Multi-disciplinary team case management (involving individualised care planning by a number of different professionals attempting to consider the multiple needs of the individual patient) is frequently the primary focus of integrated care when implemented internationally. In this perspective article, we examine the practical application of integrated care in the NHS in England to exemplify the prevalence of the case management focus. We look at the evidence for effectiveness of multi-disciplinary team case management, for the focus on high-risk groups and for integrated care more generally. We suggest realistic expectations of what integration of care alone can achieve and additional research questions.