

---

## POSTER ABSTRACT

### **"More than a visitor: Family participation in the hospitalized patient's care process, as a partner in care."**

23rd International Conference on Integrated Care, Antwerp, Flanders, 22-24 May 2023

Phoebe Ameye<sup>1</sup>

1: AZ Groeninge, Kortrijk, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium

---

Family participation is gaining importance as part of the Patient-Centered Care principle. Therefore, as part of the 'more than a visitor' project, family participation in taking care of the hospitalized patient is being explored.

The focus target group in this policy is mainly the patient and his family, (can also be the family caregiver) but should also relieve the workload on the nurses.

In response to the need to integrate this policy within the hospital, we started by creating a steering committee consisting of people from multidisciplinary branches. After concretizing the policy, it was implemented in our hospital starting with a pilot department. Through our website, newspaper and other social media accounts, the new policy was brought to the attention of the larger public and announced to patients and their families.

The entire procedure was carried out according to the principles of the PDCA (Plan Do Check Act) quality cycle. A literature study was conducted on family participation through Dutch- and English-language scientific articles. Based on this, a questionnaire was prepared for patients, relatives and nurses. From these data, a prototype was developed, with an implementation and communication plan.

The literature study showed that everyone sees advantages and disadvantages in designating a partner in care. Further analysis in practice confirmed this result. In general, what emerges strongly during these observations is that family participation can be a valuable addition in guaranteeing continuity of care and thereby increasing the quality of care and reducing the length of hospitalization by average of 1 day since the start of integration. (data obtained in AZ Groeninge from 2017-2022)

The partner in care policy has shown to be effective if it is correctly applied on a multidisciplinary level within the departments.

While analyzing how the policy is understood within the wards, we noted that several factors need improvement. These include focusing on nurse knowledge of the policy through physical training, testimonials from patients and their families (whether partner in care or not), improved patient and family information resources on the topic. Further follow-up will be necessary to complete the policy in the long term.