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**POSTER ABSTRACT****Innovating Health Governance in Australian Integrated Care**23<sup>rd</sup> International Conference on Integrated Care, Antwerp, Flanders, 22-24 May 2023Alexandra De Souza<sup>1</sup>, Carmen Huckel Schneider<sup>1</sup>, Gill Schierhout<sup>2</sup>, David Peiris<sup>2</sup>

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**Background:** Australia is one of many countries implementing integrated care initiatives to facilitate the Quadruple Aim (the improvement of health outcomes, patient experience, provider experience and health system sustainability). These initiatives can be complex while working within a fragmented and siloed health system. NSW Health has created the Patient Centred Collaborative Commissioning Groups (PCCGs) program facilitating Local Health Districts (LHDs) and Primary Health Networks (PHNs) to co-commission health initiatives targeting local populations and their specific health needs. These PCCGs are unique as they are comprised of stakeholders involved at all levels of government in addition those from the community and private sectors. The LHDs and PHNs collaborate with additional relevant and local stakeholders to co-design new service pathways and ensure collaboration within one local health system.

The literature evaluating integrated care aims at advancing knowledge of patient and provider experiences. Both areas are vital to understanding the successes and failures of integrated care but are insufficient to understand the 'how' and 'why' of successful system integration. This study therefore focuses on the under-researched question of 'is it possible to govern integrated care?'

In the Australian context, the governance of integrated care needs significant attention. In the context of this research, health system governance is defined as "the norms, structures, actors, institutions, and formal and informal relationships that shape authority and action in a health system".

**Methods:** This qualitative study involves semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders involved in the PCCGs and reviewing the governance documents of each local program. Data collected is thematically analysed and compared to existing governance models to draw out aspects of the individual PCCG governance mechanisms. This is part of a larger study that aims to understand the stakeholders, partnerships, and governance in integrated care in Australia.

**Implications for the future:** This study will provide an in-depth understanding of the decision-making processes involved in the development (and subsequent use) of the governance models, as well as determining which actors have what roles and accountabilities within the PCCG. It is vital to determine what contributes to and facilitates each domain of health system governance (as defined above) to truly understand how we can achieve sustainable health care system reform. Traditional governance models are not sufficient to regulate the dynamic nature of integrated care initiatives, so they cannot facilitate the sustainability of these initiatives. As such, the overarching aim of this research is to create an ideal governance framework that can be replicated and applied across various integrated care initiatives.