Coaching strategies to improve communication and learning in clinical microsystems: An interactive research design to reveal tacit knowledge through reflection

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Background
Though there is a substantial body of research on coaching, relatively few studies explore team coaching of quality improvement work in health care. However, some studies show that clinical microsystems deliver better results in instances where they have a coach facilitator, but how is this kind of coaching performed?

Aim
The aim was to analyse coaches reflections on how they facilitate communication and learning in clinical microsystems’ improvement work.

Research design
A basic assumption of the study is that experienced coaches of quality improvement have tacit knowledge of how they facilitate communication and learning. To make this knowledge explicit some coaches were invited to exchange experiences and reflect on their coaching strategies in a focus group. The conversations that took place in the focus group were filmed and constitute the empirical data of the study. The researcher led and thematised the conversations, but it was the coaches who contributed with the actual data in terms of their reflections on coaching strategies.
To reveal the coaches work experience a pedagogic method of Dialogue seminar was used where the coaches told, listened and reflected on each others stories of personal experience. The researcher also made some video observations of how the coaches performed in real practice. The researcher selected some sequences from the videos and showed them in the focus group to enable a deepening of the coaches reflections.

The research process was planned together with the participating coaches in an interactive research design. When the analysis is done tentative results will be discussed and validated together with coaches before they are made public in scientific arenas.