

# EVIDENCE SUMMARY: THE BENEFITS OF RELATIONAL CONTINUITY IN PRIMARY CARE



## PREVENTIVE CARE

8/10

studies showed improvements in preventive care



## UTILIZATION

61/64

studies showed positive results in lower utilization and hospitalization



## MORTALITY

11/11

studies showed reduced mortality



## HEALTH

13/16

studies showed positive results in improved health



## COST SAVINGS

16/17

studies demonstrated cost savings



## CARE QUALITY

10/16

studies showed positive results in overall care quality



## SATISFACTION

15/16

studies showed increased patient satisfaction



## ADHERENCE

6/6

studies showed improved self-management and treatment adherence

# Key messages – the benefits of relational continuity in primary care

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## Question

What is the value of relational continuity with a primary health care provider?

## Summary of findings

A growing body of evidence points to the association of relational continuity with improved outcomes & satisfaction. For some measures (utilization, mortality), the greater the degree of attachment, the better the outcomes. Although findings are similar to those from 2016, this 2017 update includes 25 new articles, a new section on the value of relational continuity to patients and providers, and more detail on utilization outcomes and on the impact of continuity on complex patients.

## Relational continuity has been associated with:

- Reduced utilization (ER visits, hospitalizations, specialist visits): 61/64 studies
  - Many of these studies focused on patients with complex needs or a chronic disease
  - Greater degree of attachment was associated with a larger impact on this outcome
- Cost savings: 16/17 studies
  - Many of these studies focused on patients with complex needs or a chronic disease
- Reduced mortality: 11/11
- Improved health & quality of life: 13/16 studies
- Improved self-management & treatment adherence by patients: 6/6 studies
- Improved preventive service delivery rates: 8/10 studies
- Improved quality: 10/16 studies
- Improved patient satisfaction & experience: 15/16 studies
  - More so in patients with complex needs or a chronic disease
- Relational continuity is valued by patients: 10/10
  - Most valued by vulnerable patients, & those with complex needs or a chronic disease
  - Less important to younger patients, & those with only acute health concerns
- Improved staff satisfaction & experience: 4/4 studies
- Relational continuity is valued by providers: 7/7
  - most valued when treating patients with complex needs

## More Information

Full evidence summary with reference list: <http://www.topalbertadoctors.org/file/top--evidence-summary--value-of-continuity.pdf>