



Research participation

Older patients' attitudes to General Practice Registrars

Dr Andrew Bonney Prof Sandra C. Jones

The Centre for Health Initiatives at the University of Wollongong, NSW, is undertaking research to examine the perceptions of older patients towards General Practice Registrars (GPRs).

The current project will involve a survey conducted with older patients and is an extension of a recent successful survey of patients across the southeast NSW region. The project is funded by CoastCityCountry Training, a Regional Training Provider for GP Registrar Training. It is hoped to survey approximately 1000 patients across Australia.

Why is this research important?

There are currently large numbers of doctors early in their general practice careers, working as GP Registrars, in surgeries across Australia. Little is known about how older patients feel about having these doctors involved in their medical care. This research aims to explore the experience of older patients to help improve the way in which these doctors are introduced into medical practices. *It is part of the first original research on patient attitudes to GP Registrars carried out in Australia.* The hope is this research will help communication between practices and patients, assist in maintaining the quality of care for patients and help doctors early in their general practice careers have a positive introduction to being a family doctor.

What will the data be used for?

The results will be used to make evidence based recommendations to Regional Training Providers to assist the interaction between older patients and GP Registrars. Research findings will be presented in journal papers and presentations to allow dissemination of the findings. Dr Bonney will use the data as part of a larger project for a PhD thesis.

How were practices selected to be approached to participate?

To obtain a representative sample, practices were selected from a number of Regional Training Providers' website lists of active training practices. We are endeavouring to obtain the opinions of patients from a wide variety of locations, and every practice's participation is valuable.



What will be required of general practices that agree to participate?

Over a one-week period commencing November 16, 2009, staff will be involved in offering a survey pack, which contains an information sheet and a survey, to 50 sequential patients aged 60 years and over who have just had a consultation.

Participating practices that successfully complete the distribution process and completion sheets will be sent a gift voucher for \$100 in appreciation of the staff time involved.

Staff will not have any further contact with participants with regards to the project, as all correspondence regarding participation will be directed to the university and not practice staff. Invitations for participation will be on a UOW letterhead to ensure patients are aware of the independence of the project, however will be distributed by the practice due to privacy and ethical issues surrounding access to patient data. *The process has been designed to cause minimal impact on normal practice workflow.*

Participation is entirely voluntary and practices are free to discontinue at any stage. Information provided by patients will be anonymous, they will not be required to provide their contact details and individual data will not be identifiable in any publications. Individual practices will not be identifiable in any publications.

The research does not constitute any form of assessment and involvement or non-involvement will not affect a practice's relationship with their Regional Training Provider or UOW in any way.

For further information, or to register your interest, you can contact one of the researchers below at the University of Wollongong:

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If you have any questions about the conduct of this research, you may contact the University of Wollongong Human Research Ethics Committee on 02 4221 4457.

Thank you for your assistance with this project.

Yours Sincerely,

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