

Preventive care card for general practice

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SUMMARY. *A new preventive care card for use in general practice has been designed and produced by a working party of general practitioners from the local medical committees of Devon and Cornwall and the Tamar faculty of the Royal College of General Practitioners. The new card, which is described in this paper, is proposed as a replacement for forms FP7A and FP8A in general practice records.*

Introduction

THE importance of the prevention of disease is recognized by both patients and doctors. At the inception of the National Health Service it was considered that the provision of a high standard of care would improve the health of the whole population and reduce the demand for disease management. In retrospect this view can be seen to be incorrect but the ideas of prevention and health promotion have developed from the original precept. It is significant that the Royal College of General Practitioners has laid great emphasis on prevention by general practitioners as described in a series of occasional papers on preventive measures.^{1,2} Further impetus is likely as the government's white paper on primary health care³ also lays great emphasis on the role of the general practitioner in prevention.

If preventive activities are to be effective then adequate records must be maintained. These records should be available at every patient contact and should allow continuity of care. This is particularly true for training practices and for partnerships that do not operate personal lists. Practices with a rapid turnover of patients face particular problems in maintaining accurate records.

Current practice

The majority of practices use the Lloyd George envelope and record cards. The current card for immunization and important notes is the FP7A for men and FP8A for women. This card is badly out of date. Almost a third of the front side of the card is reserved for smallpox, a disease which has been eradicated.⁴ There is no mention of immunization against measles or rubella and the reverse of the card has the heading 'Important notes' without any further detail.

An analysis of 100 records was made by the authors to determine the current use of forms FP7A and FP8A. The records selected were those which were newly arrived in two practices, one urban and one rural, for patients under 40 years of age. It was found that only 45% of the records contained an immunization record card and only 26% had a complete record of immunizations.

The lack of any adequate template on which to record preventive activities has resulted in many practices developing their own systems. Unfortunately these are often incompatible and when records move from practice to practice the recorded information is difficult to assess.

The College has produced a series of diagnostic colour codes

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for use on age-sex cards and medical records. Computer generated patient profiles have been developed to reflect immunization status and preventive measures. Drug companies have produced cards to record, for example, preventive actions related to prescribing oral contraceptives. This multiplicity of systems fails to provide a structured record for such areas as cervical cytology, hypertension, urinalysis, smoking or drinking habits. A recent study found that only 66% of patients had had their blood pressure noted in their records in the last five years and only 29% their smoking habits (Joint working party from Devon and Cornwall local medical committees and Tamar faculty of the Royal College of General Practitioners. Unpublished results).

General practice fosters individuality, which is valued by many doctors and their patients, and may be an effective way of encouraging personal care by an easily identified doctor. However, each general practitioner needs to work within an accepted framework and communication by medical record has been a neglected area. To overcome some of these shortcomings a working party of general practitioners drawn from the local medical committees of Devon and Cornwall and the Tamar faculty of the College have designed and produced a new preventive care card.

New preventive care card

The new card fits the Lloyd George record envelope and is perforated for a treasury tag. It is a distinctive yellow colour for ease of identification.

The front of the card (Figure 1) allows the recording of personal details, including blood group and adult height. There is a panel for the recording of allergies and risk factors. The immunizations currently recommended in childhood are recorded in date order acting as an *aide-memoire* to the schedule. The revision of the Medicines Act is anticipated and space is provided to record the date of immunization and batch number of the vaccine which has been used. The introduction of the combined mumps, measles and rubella vaccine in November 1988 is also allowed for. There is adequate space to record tetanus booster immunization and tuberculosis immunization following Heaf testing. The burgeoning travel industry provides more exotic destinations and these require a range of additional immunizations which may be recorded at the bottom of the card.

The reverse of the card lists the preventive items currently considered important by general practitioners — blood pressure, smoking and drinking habits, cervical cytology and rubella status, urinalysis and body weight. There is space for further preventive items, for example, tonometry, cholesterol and peak flow measurements. In each of these categories there is space to record the result and date.

The card has been piloted in 12 practices with a favourable response. The family practitioner committees in Devon and Cornwall printed and distributed specimen cards to all practices in their areas but restriction of funds has now stopped further printing and distribution, so that there is now an unmet demand.

The General Medical Services Committee has agreed to promote the card with the Department of Health and Social Security as a replacement for card FP7A/FP8A. The need to provide a proper record for preventive activities in general practice is urgent and the form at present distributed by the DHSS is inappropriate to today's standards. Obsolete stationery should not be allowed to influence adversely the standard of the nation's preventive health care.

PREVENTIVE CARE CARD					
Surname		Forenames		D.o.B.	
NHS Number		Blood Group	Height	Male / Female	
Allergies/Risk Factors					
IMMUNISATIONS: Enter date and batch number in each box					
	1st	2nd	3rd	Pre-School	15 +
Pertussis					
Diphtheria					
Tetanus					
Polio					
Measles		Heaf Test	Date	BCG	
			Result		
Rubella		Adult Tetanus			
Mumps					
Additional Immunisations: Enter date, vaccine (or test) and batch number in each box					

PREVENTION					
B.P.	Date				
	Result				
	Date				
	Result				
SMOKING	Date				
	Result				
ALCOHOL	Date				
	Result				
CERVICAL SMEAR	Date				
	Result				
	Date				
	Result				
RUBELLA STATUS	Date				
	Result				
URINALYSIS	Date				
	Result				
WEIGHT	Date				
	Result				
	Date				
	Result				
Additional Information					
	Date				
	Result				
	Date				
	Result				
	Date				
	Result				
	Date				
	Result				

Figure 1. The front and back of the new preventive care card.

References

1. Royal College of General Practitioners. *Combined reports on prevention. Reports from general practice 18-21*. London: RCGP, 1984.
2. Royal College of General Practitioners. *Healthier children — thinking prevention. Report from general practice 22*. London: RCGP, 1982.
3. Secretaries of State for Social Services, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland. *Promoting better health (Cm 249)*. London: HMSO, 1987.
4. Breman JG, Arita I. The confirmation and maintenance of smallpox eradication. *N Engl J Med* 1980; **303**: 1263-1266.

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RECORD CARDS

The following record cards and other items are available from the Central Sales Office, Royal College of General Practitioners, 14 Princes Gate, Hyde Park, London SW7 1PU (Tel: 01-581 3232). Cheques should be made payable to the RCGP Enterprises Ltd. Access and Visa cards welcome (Tel: 01-225 3048).

Age/sex register cards	£4.85 per 500 + p&p
Age/sex register cabinets	£17.65 each + p&p
Menstruation cards	£3.90 per 100 + p&p
Pink summary cards	£3.90 per 100 + p&p
Obstetric cards	£3.90 per 100 + p&p
Medical summary problem orientated (BD1) cards	£3.90 per 100 + p&p
Family and personal history cards (BD2A)	£3.90 per 100 + p&p
Drug treatment cards (BD3A)	£3.90 per 100 + p&p

Repeat prescription cards (BD3B)	£3.90 per 100 + p&p
Flow sheets (BD4)	£3.90 per 100 + p&p
Patient questionnaire	£3.90 per 100 + p&p
Pre school record card	£11.65 per 100 + p&p
Personal history card	£5.00 per 100 + p&p
Child health record cards	£5.00 per 100 + p&p
Diabetic care cards (patient held with free wallets)	£8.50 per 50 + p&p

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