



Yonder: a diverse selection of primary care relevant research stories from beyond the mainstream biomedical literature

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Acute kidney injury, domestic violence, allergy services, and receptionists

Acute kidney injury. Although acute kidney injury (AKI) is traditionally considered a hospital disease, a significant proportion of patients actually develop it in community settings. As it is largely preventable through timely intervention, it has been an important target of healthcare quality improvement initiatives in recent years. Certain individuals are at particularly high risk of developing it, including those with CKD, diabetes, cancer, and cognitive decline. It has been suggested that clinicians should discuss this increased risk with these patients, giving them advice about fluid balance and temporary cessation of potentially harmful medications during episodes of acute illness; known sometimes as 'sick day rules'. Researchers from Manchester recently sought to investigate the feasibility of this approach, interviewing patients, GPs, practice nurses, and pharmacists.¹ Participants expressed initial enthusiasm towards it, although this waned when they considered the complexity of implementing it in practice. Considerable funding and training are needed to embed these initiatives into routine primary care.

Domestic violence. A number of adverse health effects are associated with domestic violence and these are more acute during pregnancy. The Domestic Violence Enhanced Home Visit (DOVE) intervention trial involves perinatal home visits in US urban and rural settings. A linked interview study recruited 26 women from the DOVE study about their experiences in taking part.² It found that 'opening up' about domestic violence tended to occur in stages and, as may be imagined, home visitor communication style and the development of a trusting relationship were influencing factors. Safety planning and post-abuse support services also emerged as important issues. The authors state that all healthcare professionals involved in perinatal care require both initial and reinforcement training activities in recognising and responding to women and children. Interestingly, they also identify the need to support the resilience of clinicians, given the

emotionally challenging nature of this work.

Allergy services. In recent years, there has been recognition that the patchy provision of secondary care allergy services across the UK is problematic. GPs with special interests (GPwSIs) is a concept that has been around for some time and involves primary care physicians training to develop specific skills in a particular area, which enables them to deliver a specialised clinical service in the community. Although this model could be used to develop new NHS allergy pathways, it is unclear what proportion of referrals would be suitable for a GPwSI service. A research team from Brighton recently investigated this, reviewing 100 consecutive referrals to a specialist paediatric allergy clinic.³ For each case, three consultants reviewed the referral and clinic letters independently. They found that at least 42% and up to 75% were suitable for management by a GPwSI based on unanimous and majority agreement, respectively. They conclude that GPwSI services have the potential to considerably improve the patient pathway in this specialty.

Receptionists. In New Zealand, as in the UK, primary care services are invariably accessed through practice receptionists, who are at the beginning of the healthcare pathway and thus have a considerable impact on patient experience. As well as the important non-clinical work they do, they often informally engage in clinical activities such as triage. A New Zealand-based research team completed a focus group study of GP receptionists, examining their perceptions of all aspects of their work.⁴ They found that the way receptionists identified with a caring role strongly challenged the overwhelmingly negative view of them in public discourse. Participating receptionists felt they provided care in two key ways: for the practice and for patients. This, in turn, creates tension that may not be obvious to other staff members. If general practice is to become more patient-centred and accessible, the authors conclude, it must recognise and build on the important care work of receptionists.

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