

KEY MESSAGES

Preventive guidelines in primary health care and shared decision making

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Policy context

Current reforms in the Australian health care system recommend strengthening PHC services and their role in health promotion, prevention and management of people with chronic diseases. There is also emphasis on the need to engage patients as active partners to be more effective in implementing successful preventive care. Sharing information about the prevention of risk in the development of chronic disease and involving patients in the decision making process could facilitate the process of delivery of preventive activities in PHC.

Key messages

Conversations with researchers, general practitioners, policymakers and academics provided a number of fruitful lessons and generated ideas for future collaboration. There were many similarities and some differences between the Netherlands and Australia in the way prevention is perceived and delivered and guidelines are adhered to by GPs. Some of the key messages which could be applicable to Australian policy and practice context are:

- Effective delivery of prevention of chronic diseases in PHC can be ensured by strong provider continuity combined with good collaboration and better utilisation of the skills of practice nurses and practice receptionists.
- Gaps in communication between GPs and public health professionals should be bridged to ensure better delivery of preventive care to the population.
- Adherence to general practice preventive guidelines can be improved by having a single national organisation which develops the guidelines, and strong regional structures responsible for their implementation.
- Evidence-based decision support tools and improved information technology in GP practices should be developed, trialled and supported in Australia to improve the Government's capacity to identify effective programs for investment in the delivery of effective preventive activities in PHC.
- Policymakers should resource and support the development and implementation of programs for cultural competency of medical students and GP trainees, to facilitate better care for hard-to-reach groups.
- Integration of services, innovation and collaboration in PHC settings should be well resourced and supported at local and regional level to better meet the needs of the local population.