



ARRANGING GENERALISM IN THE 2020 PRIMARY CARE TEAM?

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POLICY CONTEXT

The National Health and Hospital Reform Commission (NHRC) final report and the draft National Primary Health Care Strategy state a preference for multidisciplinary primary care to improve chronic disease management, promote prevention and help address workforce shortages. The patients most likely to require multidisciplinary care will be those with complex and multiple health conditions. Although team care arrangements have become a focus, less is known about what the future health care needs of patients with complex and multiple illnesses are. We also have little information about what these patients value in their primary care and how to arrange it to meet their needs. If multidisciplinary teams are to be implemented in the Australian primary care setting, how much of the holistic and fundamentally generalist values might be lost? Defining features of generalists are their knowledge of patients over time and use of patients' life stories and context balanced with technical information to provide holistic care. The study's aim was to explore patients' needs and to identify if the features of generalism have relevance for the development of multidisciplinary team care in the Australian primary care setting.

KEY FINDINGS

- Primary care professionals do not use a singular definition of the term 'team'.
- There is a lack of evidence about whether multidisciplinary team care improves patient health outcomes.
- At the organisational level, there is a need for the provision of physical and technological infrastructure support to facilitate team care. A greater need is present for developing shared ways of working together across different professions and the development of information sharing systems and processes.
- Patients we interviewed had between four and 10 health care providers, but still viewed the general practitioner (GP) as the central coordinator of their care. Patients value their longitudinal relationship with their GP.
- Primary health care professionals engaged in innovative research methods to think about team care arrangements and how to develop shared ways of working together.

For more details, go to the [three page report](#)

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