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General Practice

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This monthly current awareness bulletin aims to highlight relevant reports and peer-reviewed literature in General Practice. The bulletin focuses on patient care, best practice guidelines, trends, challenges and emerging issues in General Practice.

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References

Abuelhana A., et al. (2025) 'Chronic Care in Primary Care: Exploring the Role and Impact of General Practice Pharmacists in Managing Long-Term Conditions in Northern Ireland.' *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 22(2) (pagination), Article Number: 292. Date of Publication: 01 Feb 2025.

The role of General Practice Pharmacists (GPPs) has expanded in response to increasing demands on primary care services, particularly in managing chronic conditions. While GPPs are recognised for their contributions to medication optimisation and patient care, challenges such as role clarity, workload pressures, and confidence in clinical decision-making remain underexplored. This study aims to investigate the tasks, professional identity, confidence levels, and challenges faced by GPPs in Northern Ireland. Qualitative analysis revealed key themes: clinical confidence was enhanced by training and experience, but workload pressures often limited time for patient care. Variability in role integration and the lack of public awareness were highlighted as barriers to maximising the GPP role. This study highlights the key challenges of workload distribution and role ambiguity in the GPP role. Delegating administrative tasks and developing clear frameworks for role integration could address these barriers. Additionally, targeted training programs and public education campaigns are essential to enhance the impact of GPPs in primary care.

Adam R., et al. (2025) 'Relationship between Symptoms, Sociodemographic Factors, and General Practice Help-Seeking in 10 904 Adults Aged 50 and Over.' *European Journal of Public Health* 35(1), 26–34.

Symptoms are a common reason for contact with primary care. This study investigated associations between symptom-related, demographic, social, and economic factors on general practice (GP) help-seeking. Poorer health and adverse economic and social factors are associated with increased GP help-seeking. These wider determinants of health interact with symptom experiences and will influence GP workload.

Andersen N.M., et al. (2025) 'Medical Practitioners' Experiences and Considerations when Managing Sleep Medication for Adolescents and Young Adults.' *Scandinavian Journal of Primary Health Care* 43(1), 120–130.

INTRODUCTION: The prevalence of sleep disorders and use of sleep medication, particularly melatonin, are rising among adolescents and young adults (13-24 years). In Denmark, melatonin is approved for use in children with autism and ADHD up to 18 years of age, with other prescriptions being off-label in these age groups. The perspectives of medical practitioners on prescribing sleep medications to this age group remain largely unexplored. AIM: This study aims to investigate the considerations of general practitioners (GPs) and child and adolescent psychiatrists (psychiatrists) when prescribing and deprescribing sleep medications for 13-24-year-olds.

Anderson M., and Francetic, I. (2025) 'Adoption of Clinical Pharmacist Roles in Primary Care: Longitudinal Evidence from English General Practice.' *British Journal of General Practice* 75(752), e173–e180.

Background Over the past decade, the number of clinical pharmacists working within multidisciplinary teams in English general practices has expanded. Aim To examine changes in quality of prescribing after the adoption of clinical pharmacist roles in English general practices. Conclusion: This analysis is limited by practice-level data but supports the hypothesis that clinical pharmacist implementation results in improvements in prescribing quality.

Cox S.M.L., et al. (2025) 'Comparing Visual and Automated Urine Dipstick Analysis in a General Practice Population.' *Scandinavian Journal of Primary Health Care* 43(1), 59–65.

INTRODUCTION: Urinary symptoms constitute the primary reason for female patients to consult their general practitioner. The urinary dipstick test serves as a cornerstone for diagnosing urinary tract infections (UTIs), yet traditional visual interpretation may be subject to variability. Automated devices for dipstick urinalysis are routinely used as alternatives, yet the evidence regarding their accuracy remains limited. Therefore we aimed to compare concordance between visual and automated urinary dipstick interpretation and determine their test characteristics for the prediction of bacteriuria.

Gibson C., et al. (2025) 'Perspectives of General Practice Nurses, People Living with Dementia and Carers on the Delivery of Dementia Care in the Primary Care Setting: Potential Models for Optimal Care.' *Australian Journal of Primary Health* 31(2) (pagination), Article Number: PY24154. Date of Publication: 25 Feb 2025.

Background: The increasing prevalence of dementia requires a change in the organisation and delivery of primary care to improve the accessibility of best-practice care for people living with dementia and their carer(s). The aim of this study is to describe potential models of dementia care in the primary care setting whereby the

nurse plays a central role, from the perspectives of nurses working in general practice, people living with dementia and carer(s).

Haas R., et al. (2025) 'Patterns of Imaging Requests by General Practitioners for People with Musculoskeletal Complaints: An Analysis from a Primary Care Database.' *Arthritis Care and Research* 77(3), 402–411.

Objective: The aim of this study was to examine imaging requested by general practitioners (GPs) for patients with low back, neck, shoulder, and knee complaints over 5 years (2014-2018).

Handayani N.H., et al. (2025) 'Experiences of Social Prescribing in the UK: A Qualitative Systematic Review.' *British Journal of General Practice* 75(752), e203–e210.

Background: Social prescribing connects patients to resources or activities to meet their non-medical needs. In the UK, it is often implemented in primary care. In the social prescribing pathway, patients are directed to link workers to identify suitable solutions for their needs such as art workshops or welfare benefit guidance. Social prescribing marks a notable transition from traditional medical treatments to more comprehensive strategies focusing on holistic health and wellbeing. Insights from patient experiences can improve the development of social prescribing to better meet their needs. This understanding can aid in improving the delivery and outcomes of social prescribing. Aim To synthesise qualitative research on the experiences of social prescribing among patients in the UK. Conclusion: Patients might experience lasting advantages from social prescribing if it aligns with their needs and expectations. Results highlighted the importance of matching social prescribing referral with patients' readiness to engage. Therefore, it is recommended that healthcare professionals evaluate patient suitability before beginning a social prescribing referral.

Hollingworth W., et al. (2025) 'Paramedic Or GP Consultations in Primary Care: Prospective Study Comparing Costs and Outcomes.' *British Journal of General Practice* 75(752), e166–e172.

Background General practice faces pressures because of increased demand and a shortage of GPs. Paramedics in general practice (PGPs) increasingly contribute to managing minor illnesses, conducting home visits, and providing urgent consultations. Aim: To explore the impact of paramedic consultations on patient-reported experience, safe management, and NHS costs. Conclusion: Well-designed training and supervision are needed to ensure PGPs have the right knowledge and can clearly convey healthcare plans to patients. While PGPs may reduce GP workload pressure, they do not necessarily reduce NHS costs.

Hunter C.R., and Owen, K. (2025) 'Can Patient Education Initiatives in Primary Care Increase Patient Knowledge of Appropriate Antibiotic use and Decrease Expectations for Unnecessary Antibiotic Prescriptions?.' *Family Practice* 42(2) (pagination), Article Number: cmae047. Date of Publication: 01 Apr 2025.

Background: Healthcare globally is increasingly threatened by antibiotic resistance. Misunderstanding of the appropriate use of antibiotics is common within the general population, therefore patient education could be a useful tool to employ against antibiotic resistance. Patient satisfaction with healthcare is important, and antibiotic awareness is crucial to avoid disappointment when antibiotic stewardship is practiced.

Kujansivu K., et al. (2025) 'Primary Care Physicians' Experiences of Video and Online Chat Consultations: A Qualitative Descriptive Study.' *Scandinavian Journal of Primary Health Care* 43(1), 47–58.

OBJECTIVES: To explore the perceptions and views of remote consultations and patient care of primary care physicians (PCPs) who work remotely regularly and have experience performing remote consultations. SUBJECTS: PCPs who had performed video or online chat consultations with primary care patients for at least 6 months. MAIN OUTCOME MEASUREMENTS: PCPs' perceptions and views working remotely in online chat and video consultations.

Ladds, E. (2025) 'Exploring the GP-Patient Relationship: A Historical Narration.' *Medical Humanities* 51(1), 112–122.

The relationship between patients and their doctor is a fundamental concept-particularly within general practice. Many patients and general practitioners (GPs) have a 'common-sense' recognition of the interpersonal connection, usually over time, that makes a relationship meaningful. GPs have consistently striven to emphasise the importance of this connection. While much research has explored the components and influences affecting intersubjective connections, less attention has focused on how the historical, professional, sociopolitical and philosophical contexts have influenced their experience and portrayal. However, recent claims of a crisis in UK general practice resulting from declining relational encounters suggest these are important considerations. If meaningful GP-patient connections are valuable and desirable-as GPs consistently claim they are-we require an honest discussion about the contexts necessary to enable and retain them.

Maguire N., et al. (2025) 'Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) Testing in a General Practice 2009-2019.' *Irish Journal of Medical Science* 194(1), 1–3.

Background: Prostate-specific antigen (PSA) testing is not recommended as a population screening measure for prostate cancer. PSA testing is nevertheless widespread and is associated with harm due to false-positive test results, overdiagnosis and economic costs.

McDermott I., et al. (2025) 'Employment and Deployment of Additional Roles Staff in General Practice: A Realist Evaluation of what Works for Whom, how, and Why.' *British Journal of General Practice* 75(752), e153–e158.

Background: The Additional Roles Reimbursement Scheme (ARRS) was introduced in England in 2019 to alleviate workforce pressures in general practice by funding additional staff such as clinical pharmacists, paramedics, first-contact physiotherapists, and from 1 October 2024 the scheme funds recently qualified GPs. However, the employment and deployment models of ARRS staff present ongoing complexities and challenges that require further exploration. Aim: to explore the decision-making processes behind primary care networks (PCNs) and general practice staffing choices, and how these choices influence the operationalisation of ARRS. Conclusion: This study provides novel insights into the complexities of different employment and deployment models of ARRS staff. These findings will be invaluable for creating a sustainable GP practice workforce and informing future workforce strategies as the scheme expands to include recently qualified GPs.

Myklestul H.C., et al. (2025) "Shades of Grey": A Focus Group Study on Diagnostic Uncertainty among General Practitioners using Point-of-Care Ultrasound.' *Scandinavian Journal of Primary Health Care* 43(1), 219–229.

BACKGROUND: Point-of-care ultrasound (POCUS) has long been a diagnostic tool

in family medicine, although most Norwegian general practitioners (GPs) who use POCUS, scans infrequently. The broad scope of family medicine, the relatively low prevalence of illnesses and infrequent use of POCUS imply that GPs may experience diagnostic uncertainty regularly. AIM: To explore how GPs perceived and managed diagnostic uncertainty when using POCUS.

Palmer W.L., et al. (2025) 'A Hole in the Bucket? Exploring England's Retention Rates of Recently Qualified GPs.' *Human Resources for Health* 23(1), 14.

BACKGROUND: As the senior medics within primary care services, general practitioners (GPs) have a pivotal role within the National Health Service (NHS). Despite several commitments made by government to increase the number of GPs in England, the level has consistently fallen. Much attention has been paid to recruitment of trainee GPs and overall retention, whereas this study sought to examine the specific transition from ending training to joining the NHS.

Pedersen L.B., et al. (2025) 'Clinical Effects of Accreditation in General Practice: A Pragmatic Randomized Controlled Study.' *Family Practice* 42(2) (pagination), Article Number: cmae049. Date of Publication: 01 Apr 2025.

Background: Accreditation has been implemented in general practice in many countries as a tool for quality improvement. Evidence of the effects of accreditation is, however, lacking.

Pedersen S.D., et al. (2025) 'Early Diagnosis of Rheumatoid Arthritis: Associations between Patients' Perceptions of Initial Symptoms and the Timing of Seeking Help from the General Practitioner.' *Scandinavian Journal of Rheumatology* , 1–10.

OBJECTIVES: Early diagnosis is essential to the prognosis of rheumatoid arthritis (RA), but little is known about patients' perceptions of the first symptoms. Illness representations shape patients' help-seeking behaviour. The Illness Perception Questionnaire - Revised (IPQ-R) can measure these, allowing us to understand the patients' role in diagnostic delays. The aim of this study was to explore the connection between RA patients' perceptions of initial symptoms and the time taken to seek help from a general practitioner (GP).

Petricek G., et al. (2025) 'European General Practitioners' Attitudes Towards Person-Centred Care and Factors that Influence its Implementation in Everyday Practice: The Protocol of the Cross-Sectional PACE GP/FP Study in 24 European Countries.' *The European Journal of General Practice* 31(1), 2463630.

BACKGROUND: Person-centred care (PCC) is a fundamental principle in general practice, emphasising practices tailored to individual patient preferences, needs, and values. Despite the importance of PCC, general practitioners (GPs) face obstacles in effectively implementing it, with associated factors remaining unclear.

Ribeiro M.C., et al. (2025) 'Why do Primary Care Patients Change their Physicians: An Overview of the Literature.' *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 22(2) (pagination), Article Number: 285. Date of Publication: 01 Feb 2025.

Primary healthcare has an important role in a patient's long-term health. While patients in most countries are free to change their family physician, fragmented care leads to higher healthcare costs, more preventable hospitalizations, and an increased likelihood of deviation from clinical best practice. This review aims to

identify the main reasons patients change family doctors, summarize the factors influencing these decisions, and highlight areas in healthcare that can be improved to increase patient satisfaction and design better services. The following themes were identified as reasons to change family physicians: doctor-patient relationship; consultation schedule and convenience; referrals and positive references; medication and treatment issues; practice management and cost; personal preferences and physician characteristics; and accessibility and distance. The identified themes can serve as valuable targets for developing interventions aimed at enhancing the quality of care provided to patients.

Sugiarto M.P., et al. (2025) 'Promoting Physical Activity among Cancer Survivors through General Practice: A Realist Review.' *Family Practice* 42(2) (pagination), Article Number: cmae053. Date of Publication: 01 Apr 2025.

Background: Multiple studies have shown that physical activity improves cancer survivorship, by decreasing risk of second primary cancers and chronic conditions. However, cancer survivor physical activity levels remain low. General practice presents more opportunities for lifestyle interventions, such as increasing physical activity. We conducted a realist review of physical activity interventions relevant to general practice.

Sun M., et al. (2025) 'Seizure First Aid in the Community: Current Situation, Suggestions, and the Role of the General Practitioner in Seizure Management.' *Acta Epileptologica* 7(1) (pagination), Article Number: 11. Date of Publication: 01 Dec 2025.

The unpredictability of seizures underscores the importance of timely recognition and intervention for optimal prognosis. Seizure first aid (SFA) is an essential skill for community members. We reviewed the literature to assess the challenges and explore potential solutions for effective SFA implementation in community settings. The findings reveal that the knowledge of SFA varies significantly among different groups and countries. There are common misunderstandings, such as point therapy, unnecessary ambulance calls, putting objects into the mouth, inappropriate administration of anti-seizure medications, and performing cardiopulmonary resuscitation. Effective SFA training content includes ensuring the safety of patients, avoiding restraint, using lateral position, clearing the respiratory tract, avoiding placing objects into the mouth, recording details, and seeking for professional help. Training methods range from hospital-based courses to community center workshops and online platforms. General practitioners play a pivotal role in epilepsy management and should be actively involved in SFA training initiatives. Therefore, the development of targeted, diverse, and comprehensive training and evaluation strategies, along with collaborative efforts from the whole society, is essential to improve the level and effectiveness of community SFA.

Tusek Bunc K., et al. (2025) 'Considering Family Trees as a Useful Tool in Family Medicine: A Systematic Review.' *Primary Health Care Research & Development* 26, e21.

AIM: The aim of this study was to perform a systematic literature review of the purpose, design, and use of family trees by family physicians (FPs).

BACKGROUND: Family trees offer a valuable contribution to understanding the relevance of the patient's family history in comprehensive primary healthcare provision. There is little research on the role of family trees in the everyday practice

of FPs. Studies often focus on specific diseases and their context: however, a comprehensive exploration of the usefulness of family trees is crucial for FPs.

Villalobos M., et al. (2025) 'Increasing Challenges of General Practitioner-Oncologist Interaction in End-of-Life Communication: A Qualitative Study.' *BMC Palliative Care* 24(1) (pagination), Article Number: 48. Date of Publication: 01 Dec 2025.

Background: The timely initiation of end-of-life (EOL) conversations is considered best practice for patients with advanced cancer and therefore recommended in oncological guidelines. General practitioners (GPs) play a key role in the coordination of EOL-care and often claim that they have also the responsibility to initiate the necessary conversations. Nonetheless, the content of these conversations is rarely a subject of communication between GPs and oncology specialists but crucial for timely integration of palliative care. The aim of this study is to explore the GPs' perspectives on initiation and conduction of EOL-conversations in patients with metastatic lung cancer and how they perceive the interaction with the oncologists of a cancer center.

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