

Implementation of evidence-based knowledge in general practice – an interview, questionnaire and register-based study

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Background

Keeping up with the evidence and implementing it into the daily care for patients, are fundamental prerequisites for delivering a high quality of care in general practice. However, despite many years of research into dissemination and implementation of evidence-based recommendations, significant challenges remain. In recent years, organisational factors have become widely acknowledged as vitally important for ensuring successful implementation. However, further knowledge is needed to understand more about which factors affect the seeking and implementation of evidence-based knowledge in general practice.

Aim

The overall aim was to investigate how evidence-based knowledge is sought and implemented in general practice and to analyse associations with general practitioner (GP) characteristics and quality of care. Three separate studies were undertaken, with each study covering a specific part of the overall aim.

Method

Study I is a qualitative interview study involving purposefully selected GPs representing seven different practices in the Region of Southern Denmark. Study II is based on a survey of general practitioners regarding how they seek and implement evidence-based knowledge. This survey was distributed to all GPs in Denmark who had an email address registered at the Danish Organisation of GPs in November 2013 (N = 3,440). A total of 1,580 (46%) general practitioners, representing 1,114 (58%) practices participated in the survey. In Study III, data on quality of care from national registers was linked to data from the survey. Spirometry testing among patients redeeming a first-time prescription for medication targeting obstructive lung diseases (R03 medication) were used as an example of an evidence-based recommendation and therefore as a proxy for quality of care. A total of 33,788 patients were linked to a responding practice.

Project Status

The PhD thesis was submitted on August 26, 2016 and the PhD defence is expected to take place this year. The results from Study I: *"How GPs implement clinical guidelines in everyday clinical practice – a qualitative interview study"* have been published in Family Practice.

The results from Study II: *"Variation in general practitioner's information-seeking behaviour – a cross-sectional study on the influence of gender, age and practice form"* have been accepted for publication in the Scandinavian Journal of Primary Health Care.

The results from Study III: *"Are formalised implementation activities associated with quality of care in general practice – a cross-sectional study"* are currently under review for publication in the British Journal of General Practice Open.