

Surrey Heartlands and Royal College of GPs to create a new primary care workload observatory

Surrey Heartlands Health and Care Partnership and the Royal College of General Practitioners' Research and Surveillance Centre (RCGP RSC) are at the centre of an NHS England-funded project to create a new way to understand the demand on GPs. The new national 'workload and case-mix observatory' will be created at the RCGP RSC secure data and analytics hub at the University of Surrey which is an internationally renowned source of information, analysis and interpretation. It collects and monitors data from a network of more than 350 practices across England. The Centre is a major contributor to the monitoring of vaccine effectiveness.

GPs are busy and under pressure. This project aims to provide hard, near real time evidence on current workload levels as well as provide a picture of the complexity of cases that are increasingly being seen in general practice. This in turn will help drive national policy and inform national strategy.

The project consists of 4 key components as follows:

- To increase the number of practices in the RCGP RSC network both nationally and locally
- To develop the dashboard currently produced for network practices to include information about workload
- To develop a questionnaire with which to collect additional qualitative information about general practice workload to compliment the quantitative data collected via the dashboard
- To develop an e-learning package to explain the use of the dashboard and assist with the improvement of data collection

Some of the questions we are looking to answer are:

- Why do people go to see their GP?
- What is the range of problems being seen in primary care?
- What is the number of issues brought to each consultation?
- What numbers are involved?

From which we then hope to look at:

- What targeted interventions will help relieve workload pressures
- What conditions don't need to be seen by a GP
- How to optimise the management of long term conditions
- What are the key public messages that can be taken forward

We are now looking to increase the number of practices that are currently part of the network.

Joining the network now will provide practices with the opportunity to be at the forefront of and influential in this exciting new development. In addition, practices will also benefit from:

- Funding to cover completion of membership documentation (£50 if completed within one week of receipt)
- Funding for completion of the e-learning training (£30 per person for up to 3 people). A certificate will be provided as evidence for CPD

- Funding for completion of the questionnaires (£75 per questionnaire. 2 to be completed)
- The opportunity to take part in funded quality improvement initiatives and research. New opportunities are advertised in the RSC monthly newsletter sent out to all practices in the network
- An individual interactive dashboard which includes continuous feedback on coding. This can in turn be used as evidence of constant quality improvement for CQC inspection
- Free Research Ready Advanced accreditation (usual fee £50 annually)

In terms of the time commitment involved, there is a Service Level Agreement to be signed as well as a number of data sharing agreements. Then all that's left to be done is press the button to allow data extraction to proceed. Data extraction is entirely automated.

To find out more about the project, the network and how to sign up, please contact one of the Practice Liaison Officers:

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Or contact the RSC's Medical Director: MedicalDirectorRSC@rcgp.org.uk

Further information about the RCGP Research and Surveillance Centre can also be found at www.rcgp.org.uk/rsc.