

A dialogue on evolving models of primary care



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The Australian Model





- > 20,000,000 people in Australia
- > 20,000 general practitioners
- > 100,000,000 consultations / year
- > 85% population see a GP / year
- > 25,000,000 consultations with those aged over 65 years
- > 1,000,000 home visits to those aged over 75 years









BEACH

- BEACH (Bettering the Evaluation and Care of Health)
- An initiative of the Family Medicine Research Centre and staff of the Discipline of General Practice at The University of Sydney
- BEACH is research program which, for the past decade, has continuously collected information about the clinical activities in general practice in Australia.
- BEACH is a powerful tool for public health and primary care policy development because it allows examination of trends over time



BEACH

- BEACH allows us to examine what is happening at the front line in health care provision for the people of Australia and what is happening more broadly with the health of our population
- But the collection of the data uses paper
- Paper collection of data is still necessary to allow us to understand what is happening in Australian general practice

What BEACH can tell us

- BEACH data includes:
 - Characteristics of general practitioners
 - Patients seen in general practice
 - Reasons people seek medical advice
 - Problems managed in each encounter (up to 4)
 - Medications prescribed, advised and provided
 - Clinical treatments and procedures provided
 - Referrals to consultant specialists and allied health
 - Test orders including pathology and imaging
 - Includes all consultations which result in a management action, including phone calls

- BEACH collects details of 100 consecutive patient encounters from a random sample of 1000 GPs every year (20 per week)
- It uses of cross-sectional paper-based collection system developed and validated over 30 years at The University of Sydney
- The BEACH database contains records of over 1,000,000 consultations in general practice
- Data generated is used by researchers, government, industry and non-government organisations

General Practice 1998-2007

So what can this data tell us about what is happening in Australian general practice?

- Increase in number of female GPs
- Ageing of GP workforce
- Many GPs working fewer hours
- More large group practices, fewer solo practices
- Longer consultations with patients
- Fewer home visits (>1m over 75yos/year)
- More consultations with older patients
- Increase in management of chronic conditions

General Practice 1998-2007

- Fewer medications being prescribed
- Increase in referrals
- Increase in number of tests ordered
- Increase in number of clinical treatments
- Patients presenting with more RFEs
- Decrease in management of acute respiratory conditions
- Increase in number of procedures
- Increase in work of nurses in general practice

General Practice 1998-2007

- Practice nurse involved in at least 5% of consultations
- Increase in diagnosis of diabetes
- Increase in tests ordered to monitor diabetes
- Increase in counseling for depression Increase in number of patients seen who are overweight or obese
- Decrease in number of patients seen who are smokers
- No change in alcohol consumption

The use of Electronic Medical Records in Australian General Practice

- **Ref: DK McInnes, DC Saltman, MR Kidd. GPs' use of computers for prescribing and electronic health records. MJA 2006;185:88-91**
- 90% of Australia's GPs use a clinical software package. Of these GPs:
 - 98% e-prescribing
 - 88% check drug-drug interactions
 - 85% order pathology tests
 - 78% patient recall for follow up and continuing care
 - 64% record progress notes
 - <20% access computerised information on the internet during consultations



We are yet to harness the power of the information contained in our electronic medical record systems in general practice in Australia

Our new government

- Signed Kyoto charter
- National Apology Day
- Closing the Gap initiative
- National hospitals and health care reform commission
- National preventative health taskforce
- Australia 2020 Summit
- Promised a National primary care strategy

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