What are the knowledge and views of General Practitioners towards the role of Physician Associates?

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BACKGROUND

• Currently General Practice in England is suffering from a staffing crisis. Due to a difficulty recruiting GP trainees, there has been insufficient growth in the GP workforce to meet the demands caused by population expansion (Centre for Workforce Intelligence, 2014).
• Physician Associates (PAs) should be able to: see patients with both acute and chronic conditions, take histories, perform examinations and make referrals to specialists where appropriate. (Faculty of Physician Associates, [no date]).

CONCLUSION

• Main benefits: ability for PAs to see more patients and relieve some pressure off GPs as well as possible potential benefits to the practice as a whole.
• Challenges: GP availability for supervision and limited knowledge of the PA role which on occasion led to skepticism over implementation in General Practice.
• Integration: more clarity on a GP’s role as a supervisor and specifics on what the PA role will entail.
• Education was indicated as necessary to aid in integration.

IMPLICATIONS

• Lack of knowledge could limit the potential of the PA role. Clarification on the role and Education is required.
• A resounding suggestion was to target GP education at one of the monthly training sessions.

METHODS

• Qualitative
• 7 Participants (GPs)
• Semi-structured interviews, transcribed verbatim
• Thematic analysis

RESULTS

Perceived Benefits

“they’re a cheaper alternative to doctors. So in terms of cash flow that is a benefit. But then we invest a lot of time and money in training junior doctors and it’s never going to replace a junior doctor. And I think therefore it’s kind of a role that isn’t necessarily cheaper.”
Participant G

References


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