

# Improving patient experience in primary care: a multimethod programme of research on the measurement and improvement of patient experience

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**Declared competing interests of authors:** Martin Roland and John Campbell have acted as advisors to Ipsos MORI, the Department of Health and, subsequently, NHS England on the development of the English GP Patient Survey. Jenni Burt has acted as an advisor to Ipsos MORI and NHS England on the GP Patient Survey. Pete Bower has received funding from the National Institute for Health Research in addition to the programme grant.

Published April 2017

DOI: 10.3310/pgfar05090

## Plain English summary

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Programme Grants for Applied Research 2017; Vol. 5: No. 9

DOI: 10.3310/pgfar05090

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## Plain English summary

**W**e aimed to gain a better understanding of how patients in general practice use surveys to record their experiences, to understand how staff respond to feedback and to find ways of engaging staff more actively in the process. We did this in a number of ways, including carrying out surveys, having discussions with patients and staff and trying out different ways of gathering patient feedback.

Patients were reluctant to be critical when completing questionnaires after consultations even when they did not think that their care had been very good and they explained their reasons for this. Considering the results of the national GP Patient Survey, we found that the most common reason for dissatisfaction was patients not being able to see a doctor of their choice, something that has got worse in the past few years.

We carried out several studies to understand why minority ethnic groups give low scores on patient surveys. Part of this is because they tend to be registered in practices with low scores. However, our studies also suggest that low scores from South Asian patients reflect poor care rather than, for example, different expectations.

We found that, in both primary and out-of-hours care settings, staff do not trust the results of patient surveys and do not usually make big changes in clinical care as a result of these. We looked for ways of engaging staff more actively with patient feedback. We tested 'real-time feedback' in which patients use a touch screen in the waiting room, with staff being provided with results fortnightly. Although patients found this useful, few actually used it unless they were reminded to do so by receptionists.

We describe the implications of our research for practice and make recommendations for future research.



# Programme Grants for Applied Research

ISSN 2050-4322 (Print)

ISSN 2050-4330 (Online)

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## This report

The research reported in this issue of the journal was funded by PGfAR as project number RP-PG-0608-10050. The contractual start date was in October 2010. The final report began editorial review in December 2015 and was accepted for publication in June 2016. As the funder, the PGfAR programme agreed the research questions and study designs in advance with the investigators. The authors have been wholly responsible for all data collection, analysis and interpretation, and for writing up their work. The PGfAR editors and production house have tried to ensure the accuracy of the authors' report and would like to thank the reviewers for their constructive comments on the final report document. However, they do not accept liability for damages or losses arising from material published in this report.

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