Developing and evaluating a tool to measure general practice productivity: a multimethod study

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Declared competing interests of authors: Jeremy Dawson is a board member of the National Institute for Health Research Health Service and Delivery Research programme. Amanda Forrest is a board member of Sheffield Clinical Commissioning Group.

Published March 2019
DOI: 10.3310/hsdr07130

Plain English summary

Measuring general practice productivity

Health Services and Delivery Research 2019; Vol. 7: No. 13
DOI: 10.3310/hsdr07130

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General practice is central to the NHS. Despite increasing numbers of older people and people with long-term and multiple conditions, funding has not kept pace. Practices are under increasing pressure to work more productively and in different ways.

This study set out to develop a standardised measure of productivity for general practice. The result was the General Practice Effectiveness Tool (GPET). This was developed in 16 workshops with general practitioners, practice staff and members of the public, in addition to wider consultation, although strictly speaking it could not be considered a productivity index.

The GPET comprises four performance areas (i.e. clinical care, practice management, patient focus and external focus) that are covered by 11 objectives, measured by 52 indicators, gathered mainly from existing data.

A total of 51 practices across England were trained to use the GPET. Of these, 38 practices used the tool for multiple months (28 practices used it for the full period), and their data were analysed. The effectiveness of these practices improved moderately, particularly in the areas of practice management and patient experience.

Participants were asked how useful the tool was via 38 telephone interviews, a survey of practice managers and two focus groups with patients. Views were mixed, with just under half of practices finding it useful, whereas some interviewees suggested that they could not spare enough time to use it fully.

All participants agreed that the content was appropriate, and there was a consensus that there may be scope for developing it further. Of the practices involved, 40% would be keen to use it in the future.
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This report

The research reported in this issue of the journal was funded by the HS&DR programme or one of its preceding programmes as project number 13/157/34. The contractual start date was in June 2015. The final report began editorial review in March 2018 and was accepted for publication in August 2018. The authors have been wholly responsible for all data collection, analysis and interpretation, and for writing up their work. The HS&DR 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.

This report presents independent research funded by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR). The views and opinions expressed by authors in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the NHS, the NIHR, NETSCC, the HS&DR programme or the Department of Health and Social Care. If there are verbatim quotations included in this publication the views and opinions expressed by the interviewees are those of the interviewees and do not necessarily reflect those of the authors, those of the NHS, the NIHR, NETSCC, the HS&DR programme or the Department of Health and Social Care.

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