

Whatever happened to all those attempts to change access to General Practice? Revisiting case studies to learn about innovation, impact and SUsustainable change.

GP-SUS Newsletter – May 2023

Welcome to our GP-SUS newsletter updating you on progress with our project.

News from the team

Annelieke Driessen left us for her maternity leave in April and we are delighted to tell you that she had a beautiful baby girl, Elin – mother and baby are doing very well.

We have expanded the team based in Oxford team to provide additional capacity while Annelieke is away, and we are pleased that Lucy Frost and Jacob Heath have joined us. Lucy is an academic clinical fellow (she is a GP who is training as a researcher) and Jacob is a pre-doctoral research assistant. Both have experience of doing qualitative research and are looking forward to doing data collection and analysis.

Progress with our ‘road map’ of access

We have written a research paper about the typology or ‘road map’ of different organisational approaches to enable patient access to general practice appointments and submitted this to a journal for peer-review. Many thanks to you the PPI panel members who provided very helpful input at the start and then lots of feedback about our road map.

The typology was based on our literature review but we are interested in developing this further by looking again at some ‘real life’ patient experiences. Here at Oxford we hold an archive of patient interviews (originally collected for other studies) and we know that many of these describe how patients access care. We wanted to see if these interviews can add to our ‘road map’ and so we applied for and were successful in getting funding for an internship through the University of Oxford’s UNIQ+ programme. This is an access programme which encourages and prioritises applications from promising students from disadvantaged backgrounds who want to do a small piece of research. We are delighted to report we have recently appointed an intern who will do this extra work over the summer, supervised by Catherine.

We have presented the typology to the Ca-PRI conference (Cancer and Primary Care Research International Network) – which took place in Oxford. The work was of interest to the cancer research community because of the impact on cancer diagnosis of delays accessing an appointment with GPs. We made a good connection with Cancer Research UK who are keen to see how our work can inform their policy teams. We will also present this work to the SAPC conference (Society for Academic Primary Care) in Brighton in July, which is an annual meeting for primary care researchers and academic GPs, following an earlier presentation at the local version of this conference (South West SAPC) in Birmingham in March.

Data collection in general practices

Annelieke and Catherine began observing and interviewing at the first case study site in February. This practice caters for a mostly white but economically diverse population with a high proportion of elderly patients. The observation has included visits to the practice on different days of the week, observing receptionists at work, and the waiting rooms. Annelieke formally interviewed 10 staff members in various roles including GPs, nurses and other clinical staff and receptionists and practice managers and other support staff. Catherine squeezed in an extra visit on a day just before a bank holiday (Good Friday) to see the practice on the run up to a long weekend when demand was expected to be high. The practice has begun recruiting patients and one interview has been completed so far. Meanwhile our Warwick team has started data collection at two contrasting practices. Abi Eccles is looking at a rural practice that provides care to patients, many of whom are elderly and more affluent. Carol has started work at an urban practice which is located in busy town shopping area, that serves people who are younger, ethnically mixed, and more deprived.

Two further sites are now ready to begin. The Oxford team have had a start-up meeting with their second site - a practice which in addition to its existing, largely white population, has responsibility for a group of asylum seekers. The Warwick team are looking forward to collecting data from their third site - another urban practice with relatively high levels of deprivation, starting in June. We have 3 more sites to recruit and will report back in the next update on our progress.

News from Copenhagen

The team in Copenhagen (selected as an interesting comparison site) has begun their interviews, with a senior GP at the practice. They are also exploring interviewing staff from other practices in the area who have also used this system as it appears that the 'Time Same Day' system they use has spread to other practices.

Patient and Public involvement

The current phase of the project is less demanding for you, our PPI panel. To provide some insight into this phase of work, before she went on maternity leave, Annelieke provided a brief overview /training session on 'What is ethnography?' Hopefully this answered some of your questions about the case study data collection. As we make more progress with the observation and interviews we will be seeking more PPI insights and comments from you.

Some of you were keen to have an informal coffee and chat session, we can schedule this in the next couple of months, but as ever we are happy to hear from you at any time.

Thank you once more for your ongoing interest and support.

The GP-SUS team

The Team

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Helen Atherton	Co-Principal Investigator
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Abi Eccles	Researcher
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Project website

<https://www.phc.ox.ac.uk/research/health-experiences/gp-sus>