

Evans C, Poku BA, Pearce R, Eldridge J, Banerjee A, Blake H. Characterising the Evidence Base for Advanced Clinical Practice Roles in Primary Care in the UK: A Scoping Review. HEE Advancing Practice Conference 2019, 14th November 2019, Kia Oval, London.

BACKGROUND

NHS policy highlights the need for workforce development to combat the shortage of GPs and the increasingly complex care being delivered by primary care. ACP roles are seen as an effective solution to primary care workforce development pressures.

AIM

This scoping review sought to characterise the existing evidence base on ACPs in primary care in the UK.

METHODS

An established scoping review methodology was followed. A comprehensive search of databases and other sources was undertaken in May 2019. A template for data extraction, charting and analysis was developed based on the PEPPA-PLUS framework.

RESULTS

Thirty-six studies were included, relating to nursing (n=17), physiotherapy (n=13), pharmacy (n=5) and multi-professional (n=1). All except one reported exclusively on ACP's clinical function, with little information on, or evaluation of, other role dimensions. The nursing and pharmacy studies primarily reported patient-centred and healthcare team performance outcomes, whereas physiotherapy studies focused mainly on service appropriateness and impact on healthcare access and resources. All studies reported positive outcomes with no significant adverse events, although the increasing complexity of the GP workload was highlighted as a concern. A range of implementation issues were identified, in particular the need for ongoing support and professional development for ACPs.

CONCLUSIONS

ACPs in primary care are making a positive and well accepted contribution. However, there is a dearth of evidence on how ACPs can best be utilised and supported to establish an optimal skill mix and service design within primary care that can be sustainable in the long term.