

Evans C, Greaves S, Pearce R, Blake H. Evaluation of the Role of the Advanced Clinical Practitioner in Primary Care across the East Midlands. HEE Advancing Practice Conference 2019, 14th November 2019, Kia Oval, London.

BACKGROUND

Workforce transformation programmes across the UK are promoting the rapid adoption of ACP roles within primary care.

AIM

To evaluate the ways in which ACP roles are being utilised within primary care in the East Midlands and to explore key barriers, facilitators, perceived impacts and future development needs from the perspectives of key stakeholders.

METHODS

A qualitative design was adopted. Nine GP practices were included across Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire. Within each practice, ACPs, GPs and the Practice Manager (PM) were invited to be interviewed (n=26 in total). Data were analysed thematically.

RESULTS

All participants were highly positive towards ACP roles. The GPs and PMs saw the roles overwhelmingly in terms of GP substitution whereas ACPs talked more of career progression and development. All groups reported a high level of patient acceptance of the role. Key impacts were on improving access to services and managing excessive practice workloads. The main concerns of GPs and PMs related to the high variability in training, experience and competency. GPs reported reduced appointment pressures, but a perceived increase in complexity of cases and managerial responsibilities. ACPs reported a need for more primary care specific training, mentorship and support. The ACP's work appeared to be primarily clinical with relatively little scope for development in other domains of advanced practice.

CONCLUSIONS

ACPs now play a key role in primary care. There is a need for more standardised and specialist training and more research to establish optimal service models and appropriate skill mixes.