

Embedding public involvement in a realist evaluation of GPs in Emergency Departments

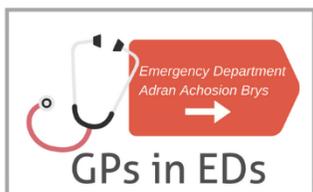
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Public involvement in research is best practice but can be undertaken in partial or tokenistic ways. Factors hindering effective involvement include research timescales, study complexity and an unsupportive research environment.

We involve **public contributors** in a realist evaluation of GPs working in or alongside Emergency Departments (termed GP-ED models).

GP-ED models were implemented in response to highly publicised pressure on ED services. The topic generates **strong public emotion**. Patients' perspectives complement academic and clinical expertise in this research.

Our mixed method study includes: realist literature review; survey of hospitals; time series analysis of routine data; health economics evaluation; case studies using observations and interviews.



Staff 'too scared' to speak about long queues in A&E



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Method

We planned public involvement **alongside** planning our study.

We proposed:

- 2 public members of the co-applicant Research Management Group
- 2 more public members of the independent Study Steering Group
- Public contributors at 2 stakeholder events
- A named team member responsible for Public Involvement: to support, facilitate and document activity



Results

Public involvement has **extended into all aspects** of study delivery, supported by the co-applicant team.

Public contributors are active team members. They helped develop the original research application. They attend all research meetings. They bring new insight to discussions and sometimes they challenge decisions. They have also co-developed a follow-up research proposal.

Unanticipated roles undertaken by public contributors include: interview analysis; planning and facilitating stakeholder event workshops; auditing public involvement across the study according to the UK Standards for Public Involvement; reviewing non-academic dissemination of study findings.

Academic and clinical co-applicants report high awareness of patient and public perspectives. The study funder has acknowledged the quality of our public involvement throughout.

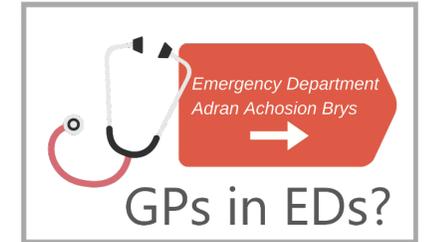
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Conclusion

A **supportive research environment** has enabled public involvement to be **embedded** in this study. This has allowed the study team to hear and understand patient perspectives when making research decisions.

This is particularly important when the research is about a topic which generates so much **public interest and concern**.

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<http://www.primecentre.wales/gps-in-eds.php>



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