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Conference Abstract

Home visits on a downward trend: what are the implications for older people?

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Abstract

Purpose: To alert you to the decreasing home visit activities for the target group of older people.

Context: In the past decades, home visits have rapidly declined in Germany and in other European countries. To conduct visits is a core task for general practitioners (GPs). The downturn mainly affects older patients living at home or in residential care.

State of the art: According to our analysis of electronic patient records in German general practices, a doctor undertakes 25 visits per week. $\frac{3}{4}$ of all visited patients are 65 years and older. Visited patients are less mobile and more likely to have multiple diseases. Statistics reveal that GPs progressively provide fewer visits. They view home visits as interfering with their busy practice work and as badly paid. Whereas in other countries practice nurses increasingly perform home visits to relieve doctors from this task, the delegation of visits is not generally permitted in Germany - only in underprovided areas.

Statements for debate: It is not known, how many visits older people unable to attend the practice require. An under provision is difficult to define. Health professionals other than physicians will take on the challenging task of looking after frail patients with multi-morbidity. We need standards of health care for older people who rely on home visits. I like to discuss good solutions that may be practiced in other health care systems.

Keywords:

home visits, general practice, old age, healthcare delivery

Presentation available at: <http://www.euprimarycare.nl/istanbul/conference-programme-efpc-2013-istanbul-results>