

Patient Participation Report

January 2014



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Harpenden
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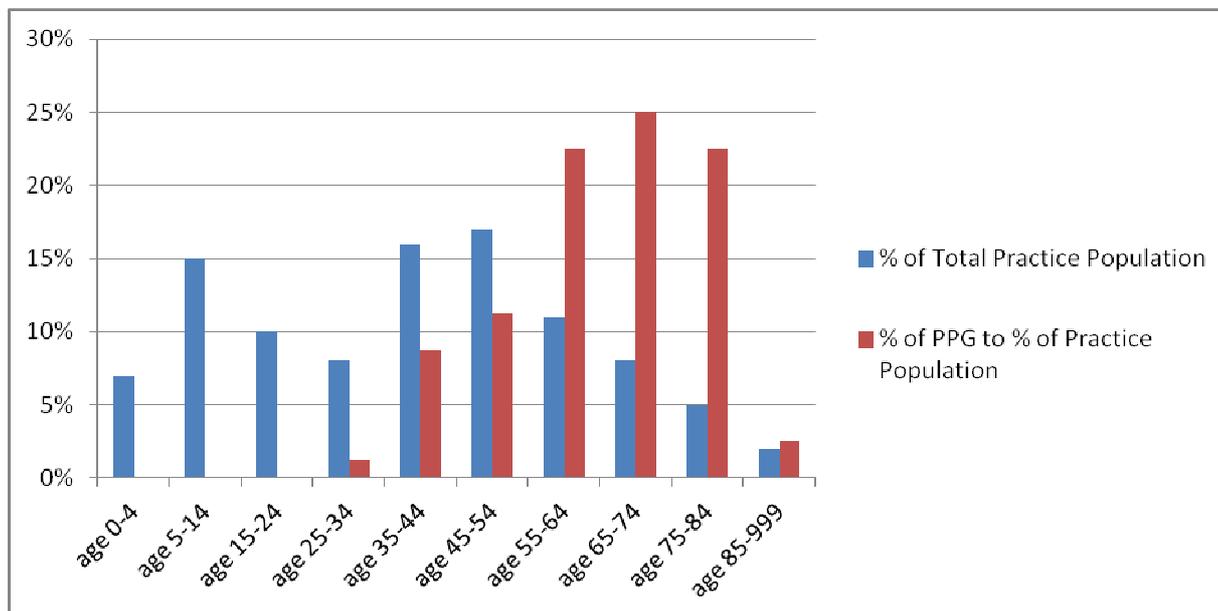
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The Elms Medical Practice set up a virtual Patient Participation Group (PPG) in order to listen to the views of our practice patient population. Within this group we set up a Patient Representative Group (PRG) which is a smaller group who've met in the initial stages of setting up the PPG with a future view of meeting every quarter to discuss issues and suggest improvements to the service we offer here at the Elms.

Overall, the current PPG members would appear to be a reasonable reflection of our Practice population profile however considerable efforts continue to gain more members. We do hope to develop the PRG further in particular involving the under 24 age group and to ensure we have a pro-active group committed to improving our patient's experience.

Below is a graph showing our patient demographic age groups:



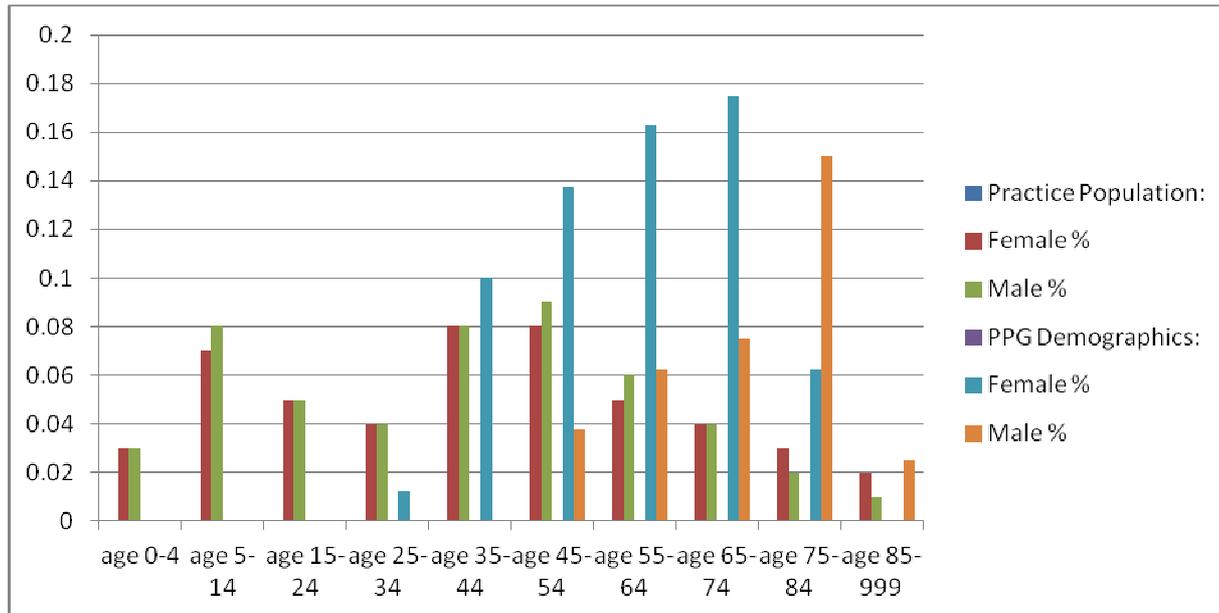
As you can see we have a lot of members over the age of 55 years, about 5% less than we should have in the 35 – 54 age range, way below in the 25 – 34 range and have no one on the patient participation register under 24 years of age. The under 40 years of age have often proved to be the hardest group to reach to encourage to join and partly this is due to the fact that these age groups are more infrequent attenders of the surgery.

Dr Dylan Phillips,

Dr Jackie Impey, Dr Cathy Argyle, Dr David Hemsli, Dr Julian Smith, Dr Bethan Rees, Dr Charlotte Allam, Dr Rebecca May

Practice Manager Sarah Brindley

Below is a graph showing our patient demographic age/sex groups:



As you can see we have a fairly even distribution of females and males registered at the practice however we have more female PPG members up to the age of 75 and then the males take over.

Many of our patients are carers. We currently have 70 patients registered as carers at the practice but we know there are many more who have not come forward as many people who are caring for someone do not consider themselves to be a carer. Four of those patients who are registered carers are members of our PPG.

We are constantly trying to encourage more patients to join the PPG and promote awareness. This includes:

- Regular Practice Newsletters encouraging patients to get involved
- Advertising the PPG on the dedicated pages of our Practice website
- Information about the PPG and how to join are handed to all new registering patients
- Advertising on the waiting room plasma screen
- Reception team actively encouraging patients to join

We now have a dedicated page on our website including the quarterly newsletter, survey reports and a 'comments and questions' box so that communication channels are always open. The page is still a work in progress and we hope to develop this part of our website to make sure our patients are given a voice.

From PPG feedback and discussions we established that the phone system is still an issue but after the various changes since the last survey, patients were eager to know if these changes had made any difference to their experience at the surgery.

What the PPG and the Practice have achieved so far:

- Increased the number of staff members who answer the phone during our busiest times.
- Incorporated an on-line repeat prescribing facility through our website.
- Improved our Health promotion messages on the waiting room information screen.
- Introduced the self check in
- Used publicity to reduce the number of DNA's (Did Not Attend)
- Trained all staff to say their name when answering telephone calls and to wear their name badges at all times to give patients an immediate reference and personal touch.
- On line appointments
- Minor surgery on the day nurse appointments

- A feedback form linked through our website to allow for a continual open communication channel for all our patients

It was agreed by members of the PPG that appointment access was still the number one priority. We therefore asked our PPG (virtual group) to complete a similar survey to last year's so that some comparison could be made and what else we can do to improve things further. This year we used 'Survey Monkey' to collect and analyse the completed forms. The survey was available for a two-week period. Patients were asked 23 questions which focused on the patient's experience and feedback. The practice wanted to know if any practice improvements had enhanced the patient's experience, how clinicians are performing and to ascertain the types of services patients have used instead of visiting their GP.

We are very pleased to see that the response was a positive one and that many areas have improved. Although a high percentage of patients find it 'fairly easy' getting through to the surgery and making an appointment the survey clearly shows there were still existing problems. We hope that the recent online appointments and prescribing will make an impact on our access and the soon-to-be installed new telephone system will hopefully improve this further.

63% of patients in the last 12 months were always or usually able to make routine appointment with the doctor as soon as they needed it. We need to address the 5% who feel this never happens.

60% of patients were seen within 15 minutes of their appointment. However, this still means that 40% said that they did not. Clinicians are always looking at their time management skills as part of their personal development but obviously this needs addressing further.

Doctors and nurses scored well in their treatment of patients. On 'Treating with Dignity and Respect' 100% of the patients felt that the doctors were either good or very good and 96% for the nurses. The doctors did not score as highly on 'explaining tests and treatments' at 85% good or very good. This will be part of all GPs continued development and will be discussed as a learning point at future clinical meetings.

Over half the patients surveyed had not used any of the services such as family planning clinics. It was very positive to see that no patients had visited A&E and from this one can assume that patients were all able to see a GP either within the practice or using the practices out of hours service.

It is heart warming to see that certain changes such as appointments online and prescribing online have been acknowledged and well received through our practice newsletter and website.

Nearly 90% of patients like the automatic checking service. This has reduced the queues at the reception desk and addresses confidentiality issues that may arise.

52% of the patients who completed the survey were not aware of the changes to our nursing team and that our lead nurse is now qualified to treat minor illnesses despite advertising this on our website and plasma screen in the waiting room.

Presently the practice books up to two weeks in advance for GPs and four weeks in advance for nurses however patient comments show that lengthening advanced booking would be useful, particularly if needing to book consecutive appointments. Lengthening advanced booking has been done in the past and led to a huge rise in DNA (did not attend) rates. However the practice is looking to bring in text reminders for appointments so advance booking will be looked at again as a more viable option once this is installed.

Other comments showed that many patients are still not aware of our extended opening hours which are particularly useful for commuter patients. We have extended hours on Thursday evenings, Friday mornings and every third Saturday. Actions have already been taken to address this. All extended hours appointments are available to book through our online appointment system. Also the exact Saturday dates have just been added to our opening hours which are available on our website, at the front of the practice and in the waiting room.

There were a few negative comments about the duty doctor on the day appointments. This system was set up to tackle the ever-increasing demand for appointments. The GPs and nurses see on average 1,300 patients a week and the majority of patients are seen for minor illness. Often these issues can be

dealt with promptly and a further non urgent treatment is required routine appointment can then be made. We have introduced a minor illness qualified nurse and have taken on a physician assistant to help with the day-to-day cases of minor illness. This then opens up the access to GP routine appointments for things such as long-term chronic conditions and the more serious cases. On average we have 5/6 GPs and 2/3 nurses working each morning and each afternoon per day. All annual leave is covered by three regular locums Dr Kolamala, Dr Mcquade and Dr Garner.

Further patient comments:

I AM EXTREMELY HAPPY WITH EVERYTHING THANK YOU

I think this is an excellent practice, and have written in to the Practice Manager twice to state this.

Re people hearing my comments made at reception, I write things down and hand the note to the receptionist. Easy!

I am soon to move to Cornwall and other than family in Herts, top of my "things I'll miss" list is the Elms Practice. After about 30 years as a patient I STILL cannot fault the patient care.

On line booking, cancellation, and repeats are a great advance.

A superb surgery in every way - everyone really cares about me

Overall the survey was very positive and we will be addressing all the issues, comments and suggestions. We are delighted to read such wonderful comments about our practice and services. We know we must maintain the high standards we have established but at all costs avoid complacency and build continually to meet the ever changing needs of our patients and demands on the Practice and our NHS future. We will always listen to our patients and continue to work together to improve and develop our services to meet the needs of our patients.

The survey results were sent out to the PPG for further comments of these findings. General comments were very positive and many felt they had learnt more about the surgery. Feedback was very supportive and keen for the new telephone system. Comments were made asking for a reminder of our opening hours, the availability of our GPs and nurse services:

THE ELMS MEDICAL PRACTICE OPENING HOURS 2014

Monday 08:00 – 18:30

Tuesday 08:00 – 18:30

Wednesday 08:00 – 18:30

Thursday 08:00 – 20:00 (late night)

Friday 07:00 – 18:30 (early morning)

2014 Saturday Opening Dates (to May)

11th January

1st February

22nd February

15th March

5th April

26th April

OUT OF HOURS

**If you need medical help fast but it's not life threatening,
please call the NHS 111 number.**

**If an emergency (life threatening, serious injury or
critically ill) please call 999**

GP Hours/Availability

GP	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Dr Phillips	-	-	AM/PM	AM/PM	AM/PM
Dr Impey	-	AM/PM	AM/PM	-	AM/PM
Dr Argyle	AM/PM	AM/PM	-	AM/PM	-
Dr Hemsi	AM/PM	AM/PM	AM/PM	-	AM/PM
Dr Smith	AM/PM	AM	AM/PM	AM/PM	AM/PM
Dr Rees	-	-	AM/PM	AM/PM	AM
Dr Allam	AM/PM	AM/PM	-	AM	AM/PM
Dr May	AM/PM	AM/PM	-	PM	AM

OUR NURSE TEAM & LIST OF THEIR SERVICES

Ruth Mayo (Lead Nurse) – Qualified in treating minor illness
Clare Mealey
Paula McGinnigle (Warwick certificate in Diabetic Care)
Isobel McCubbin
Teresa Williams (Health Care Assistant) - Phlebotomist

Minor Illness
Wound Care – dressings / removal of sutures
Family Planning and contraception
Well person health checks for new and existing patients
Asthma annual reviews (2 nurses hold asthma diplomas)
Smoking Cessation
Diabetic Annual reviews
Phlebotomy
Blood Pressure monitoring
ECGs
Travel vaccinations and advice
Childhood Immunisations
Flu clinics
Cervical screening
Ear syringing
Spirometry testing
Diet/weight

ACTIONS from the PPG Feedback:

- 1) Recent On line appointments and repeat prescribing have slightly reduced the number of calls to the Practice; to date 2046 patients (14%) have opted in to using this service which is approximately 14% of our age 16 years and above practice population. Receptionists are very proactive informing patients about this service but the practice need to action other ways to get the message to everyone. Immediate action – invites to go with all repeat prescribing requests.
- 2) Difficulty at getting through to the surgery by phone – The practice is about to have a new telephone system installed which should greatly improve the telephone access.
- 3) Many patients were not aware of our lead nurse qualified in treating patients with minor illness and that we also have a physician assistant who is also qualified to see patients with minor illness. This allows a further treatment path for our patients and another option for patients seeking advice. It is clear that we need to advertise this service more than we presently do. The reception team have been trained to find out a little more as to why the patient needs an appointment and to signpost the patient appropriately.
- 4) 4 week advance booking is available for nurses. GPs presently are 2 weeks in advance however we appreciate this can cause difficulties for some of our patients when trying to book consecutive appointments. As mentioned earlier in this report, this has been piloted before but found our DNA (did not attend) rate increased due to the distance of the appointment. As the practice is now looking at bringing in an appointment reminder texting service this may now be a viable option.
- 5) There were adverse comments about the time waiting for a clinician. We do appreciate this can cause anxiety while waiting. Our reception team have been asked to always keep the patients informed about any delays. Unfortunately delays are inevitable as sometimes patients require much longer than the 10 minute appointment. However clinicians and reception will be reminded to make sure patients are kept informed at all times.
- 6) It was agreed to further advertise the extended hours appointments in the surgery, waiting rooms, website and newsletters. All extended hours appointments are available on line for easy access out of surgery hours but more advertising of this service is necessary.

Most actions will be put in place with immediate effect. The new telephone system should be installed before April 2014. The next newsletter will be in Spring and will focus on the survey findings and advertising the surgery opening hours.

We hope you found this report of interest. This report will also be on the practice website:

elmsmedicalpractice.co.uk/PPG

and hard copies will be available at reception and in the waiting room.

Once again thank you to all that took part in this survey. If you have any further comments or suggestions, please either fill in the comments box on our website or write directly to the Practice Manager Sarah Brindley. Thank you.

