Patient Participation

Birchfield Medical Centre Patients' Association

The idea of patient participation caught our imagination. None of us had ever been asked whether we would like to be part of our care. It was as if this idea meant that we were saying we were one part of a team - that we were part of the decision-making process. This idea of being a partner in the care of one's health seemed to be what we all wanted.

A group of us in the surgery led the way in setting up the committee. We had some previous experience of working together on other committees. We soon found ourselves involved in a series of small, incremental steps - deciding to invite our neighbors, discussing the meaning of participation, and preparing to change the service at the surgery. But our main achievement in this area is to engage in a dialogue with the doctors on the surgery. We meet regularly to discuss ideas, and we have formed a group of patients who meet with the doctors every few months to discuss new services.

The success of the committee lies in the way that we have been able to foster and maintain this open communication. Our meetings are informal, and we try to involve everyone who wants to join in. We have also established a patient newsletter to keep everyone up to date with what's happening.

Beyond the Surgery

General practices in the factory

F. Wilkinson

A regular weekly session as a medical advisor at a factory drugstore can offer many opportunities to improve the health of the workforce throughout the year. The general practitioner must be aware of the importance of prevention rather than cure.

Other rules

In this context, a factory is often seen as the main way for patient participation groups, and indeed in practice it is usually the case that the majority of the patients in our group are from the workforce. The factory can be the main source of our prescribing, and we also work extensively to maintain the health and safety of the factory. The negotiations have also been more successful in obtaining the factory's consent to attend surgery and clinics to talk to patients.

Unemployment in My Practice

Govan, Glasgow

John Mackay

In 1980 unemployment in Govan increased by 300% in one year, and this coincided with a reduction in services at the surgery. The area has a large proportion of people who are unemployed, and the surgery servers a large number of these people. The surgery has a strong community feel, and many of the patients are long-term residents. The surgery has a large number of elderly patients, and this is reflected in the number of patients who are unemployed.

Different from the 1980s

In the 1980s, unemployment in Govan was lower, but still high. The surgery served a large number of people who were unemployed, and the surgery was well used. The surgery had a strong community feel, and many of the patients were long-term residents. The surgery had a large number of elderly patients, and this is reflected in the number of patients who were unemployed.

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