Illness among holidaymakers and the effect on a seaside practice

NEAL M. MASKEY, JOHN P. POPPLETON, DAVID J. KNOWELDEN, LEO C. GRAHAME

Abstract
Between 1 May and 30 September 1983 a practice of doctors in the town of Scarborough, in the county of Yorkshire, UK, took care of patients with back pain, neck pain, and headaches who were holidaymakers from the United Kingdom. The patients were seen by the doctors in their normal practice, and the practice was open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday to Thursday, and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Friday. The doctors carried out their normal practice activities, and in addition they checked each patient's medical records and noted any relevant information provided by the patient. These records were then used to analyze the data. The results of this study were compared to those of a similar study conducted in 1982.

Method and results
We examined all patients (aged 15 and older) who presented to the practice for treatment of their symptoms. The patients were divided into two groups: those who presented upwards to April 15, 1983, the start of the study period; and those who presented from April 16 to September 30, 1983, the end of the study period. The results were then compared to those of a similar study conducted in 1982.

Discussion
The number of patients seen in the practice during the study period was 141. Of these, 76 were seen for the first time, 35 for the second time, and 30 for the third time. The remaining 10 patients were seen for a total of four visits. The most common complaints reported by the patients were upper back pain, neck pain, and headaches. The patients were then categorized into three groups: those who were seen during the first time period, those who were seen during the second time period, and those who were seen during the third time period. The results were then compared to those of a similar study conducted in 1982.

Practice organisation

The case for small practices

H. HUSSAIN

The Small Practices Association has been formed by general practitioners in small practices in order to improve their working conditions and to provide better services for their patients. The practice is located in a small town in the county of Yorkshire, UK, and is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday to Thursday, and 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Friday. The practice has a total of 20 general practitioners, and the average number of patients seen per day is 50. The practice is currently undergoing a review of its working conditions and services, and the results will be presented at a meeting to be held in the near future.

How to achieve change

I welcome wholeheartedly the declared objectives of the Small Practices Association and the work of its individual members. I believe that the Small Practices Association should be provided with the necessary resources and support in order to improve and develop their work.

Conclusion

We have found that illness among holidaymakers and the effect on a seaside practice can be significant. The practice needs to be aware of these issues and to take appropriate action to ensure the well-being of its patients.