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Adversaria

IN THIS ISSUE of *Longwood's Review*, we feature two articles that focus directly on the heart of healthcare – caring for patients.

The first paper, published here in its entirety, presents results of focus groups with patients receiving primary healthcare in an urban setting. This research is part of a larger funded project based at the University of Wisconsin that is specifically investigating medical errors in primary care. Dowell et al. were interested in determining patients' perceptions of what constitutes "good" or "inadequate" care. The findings showed that patients were most concerned about system issues such as long waiting times, lack of regular access to appointments, lack of communication, and inadequate staffing or funding. A subset of themes that were brought to light by the research included concern about providers' interpersonal skills in that primary care physicians are often rushed or do not seem to listen. However, on the positive side, patients valued the knowledge and technical skills of doctors and nurses. The patients interviewed also raised comments about errors in terms of medication errors, lapses in attention and technical errors. This small study will now form the bases of a large-scale investigation from both providers' and patients' perspectives.

The second paper, which is published in full on the *Longwoods Review* website, reports on important efforts to examine the status of cancer patient education in Canada. Telephone interviews were conducted with the leadership of the formal Canadian Cancer Centres and Clinics (CCCs). Accrediting bodies such as the Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations in the United States and the Canadian Council on Service Accreditation are increasingly interested in developing guidelines for patient education. In this paper, Freidman et al. report on both past and future efforts to create a Comprehensive Patient Education Network (CPEN) in Canada. In fact, in 2003 a CPEN Canada proposal was endorsed by the Canadian Association of Provincial Cancer Agencies, the interprovincial organization representing provincial/territorial cancer agencies and programs engaged in cancer control. These are critical steps that will lead to the development of national standards and guidelines for cancer patients' education.

Peggy Leatt, PhD



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