

Barriers and Facilitators to Implementing a Young Person's Health Check in General Practice: Findings from Qualitative Interviews with General Practice Staff in Victoria

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Background:

Australian general practice guidelines recommend annual health checks for adolescents (14–24-year-olds), but general practitioners (GPs) cite inadequate funding and time as significant barriers to conducting these. The Rebate Adolescent Health (RAd Health) trial aims to determine if a fee-for-service payment might enhance the provision of health checks to this priority population. Here we describe the barriers and facilitators to health checks for adolescents reported by health professionals participating in the RAd Health trial.

Methods:

Twenty semi-structured interviews were conducted (via Zoom or telephone) between April 2023 and June 2024 with GPs (n=12), practice nurses (n=6) and management staff (n=2) from practices participating in the RAd Health trial. Interviews explored perceptions of health checks for adolescents, and facilitators and barriers to implementing health checks. Data were explored using content analysis.

Results:

Interviewees were predominantly female (16/20, 80.0%) and half (10/20, 50.0%) were aged 31-44 years. Most worked in metropolitan Victoria (13/20, 65.0%) and had been randomised to the intervention arm of RAd Health (14/20, 70.0%). Interviewees perceived health checks for adolescents to be valuable, and most from intervention clinics (who were able to access a rebate for health checks) had conducted at least one during the trial. Interviewees highlighted characteristics specific to their practice that they felt impacted implementation, including workforce capacity to introduce and sustain the health check logistics, existing or developing rapport with adolescent patients to understand their health needs and gauge interest in having a health check, as well as staff interest in or commitment to adolescent health.

Conclusions:

Adolescent health checks are considered by general practice staff to be beneficial. Some barriers and facilitators to implementing an adolescent health check in general practice are clinic specific. Consideration of these characteristics may help tailor support and improve general practice's ability to offer adolescent health checks.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

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