



AIC GP Survey 2013 Highlights GPs' Thoughts on Primary Care Initiatives

By Agency for Integrated Care

We shared our plans for a second Agency for Integrated Care (AIC) GP Survey 2013 in the February 2013 issue of *SMA News* (<http://goo.gl/umvTMR>). Developed to build on the findings of the first AIC GP survey conducted in 2011, the second survey aimed to gain a deeper understanding of the perceptions, motivations and needs of GPs in key primary care initiatives. Some 500 GPs responded to this survey which was conducted from 26 March to 8 May this year.

Results of the survey

Chronic Disease Management Programme (CDMP) and Community Health Assist Scheme (CHAS)

In general, GPs felt that reducing the frequency of clinical data submission and issuing waivers for token fees were two key factors which would encourage more GP clinics to participate in CDMP. They also cited the increase in the quantum of subsidies for patients as the greatest motivation for more GP clinics to participate in CHAS. Following the enhancements to CHAS implemented on 15 January 2012, 75% of survey respondents who have been participating in CHAS for more than six months indicated that they saw an increase in the number of new patients with chronic diseases who are covered under the scheme.

Mental health

Most GPs would consider either starting to treat or treating more patients with anxiety and depression, if there was additional support from counsellors and psychologists. 30% of GPs considered having more support from psychiatrists in co-management of mental health patients as the most important factor to integrate mental health services into primary care. These findings highlighted the need for restructured hospitals to strengthen support for GPs in managing mental health conditions through training and shared care programmes.

Knowledge of intermediate and long term care services (ILTC)

41% of GPs surveyed were not familiar with the ILTC service providers. To create awareness and facilitate GPs'

referrals to ILTC services, AIC has recently launched several initiatives, including the release of an improved version of the Community-based Care – Health and Social Care Service Directory 2013/2014 (<http://goo.gl/an6jzm>), and enhancements to the Singapore Silver Pages (<https://www.silverpages.sg>) and Primary Care Pages (<http://www.primarycarepages.sg>). The updated care service directory includes a list of community mental health services, contact details for legal aid, as well as updates on the grants and funding support available, which will serve as a useful reference for GPs who are approached by their patients for advice.

Use of IT

25% of GPs surveyed did not use a clinic management system in their clinics. The majority of these respondents (77%) were solo GPs, and aged 50 years old and above.

Additional key survey results

- 96% of GPs saw patients with chronic diseases (excluding mental health), and 43% of these GPs indicated that more than 80% of their patients with chronic diseases saw them regularly.
- 60% of GPs referred their patients to polyclinics for services. The top three types of services that patients were referred for were: diabetic retinal photography, X-rays and mammography.
- GPs would like to be updated on developments in the primary care sector; as well as have a dedicated hotline for them to raise concerns and feedback.

We thank all the GPs who had participated in this survey. AIC will continue to work with various stakeholders to leverage on the survey findings so as to propose enhancements, address the issues raised and work in partnerships to bring collective improvements to the primary care sector. We believe that continuous engagement with GPs will pave the way for better mutual understanding and bridge the gaps between us. If you have any suggestions or feedback to share, please email us at gp@aic.sg. **SMA**