

Publication: [Identifying primary care patient safety research priorities in the UK: a James Lind Alliance Priority Setting Partnership](#)

Publication details (Vancouver format)

Morris RL, Stocks SJ, Alam R, Taylor S, Rolfe C, Glover SW, Whitcombe J, Campbell SM. Identifying primary care patient safety research priorities in the UK: a James Lind Alliance Priority Setting Partnership. *BMJ Open*. 2018;8:e020870.

What are the most important findings/conclusions in this paper? Why are they important?

This was the first national study to identify the 'Top 10' priority questions about primary care patient safety research from the point of view of patients and healthcare professionals. As there is only a limited amount of research funding, it is important that issues which are important to healthcare professionals and patients are researched so that the findings are useful in practice.

The agreed 'Top 10' research priorities were:

1. How can patient safety be assured for the most vulnerable in society (e.g. people who are frail, have mental health problems or cognitive impairments?)
2. How can we make sure that the whole patient is treated, not just one condition and mental health and physical health both being treated together?
3. How can we improve safe communication and co-ordination of care between Primary and Secondary care?
4. In what ways does work intensity, hours worked and staffing levels affect patient safety/near misses?
5. How does continuity of care influence patient safety?
6. How well do patients understand the information that has been conveyed to them during the consultation?
7. What can Primary Care do to identify and support people who may be at risk of suicide?
8. Which type of practitioner (e.g. GP, advanced nurse practitioner, practice nurse) is safest to see which types of patients (acute illness, acute or chronic multi-morbid)?
9. How can information within patient medical records be made available to patients and care providers in a way that protects privacy and improves safety and quality of care?
10. How can risks be mitigated to allow for safe complex care at home?

What did you do?

We ran the study with the [James Lind Alliance](#), which is an organisation that helps to bring together patients, carers and healthcare professionals to agree a 'Top 10' list of research questions about a topic. The top 10 can be used by funders to make sure research that is funded answers the most important questions.

In our study, we asked patients, carers and primary healthcare professionals (e.g. General Practitioners (GPs), nurses, pharmacists) in the UK what they thought were the most important research questions about primary care patient safety. 341 patients and 86 healthcare professionals suggested 443 questions.

We then sorted through the questions to check that they were about primary care patient safety and removed repeated questions. We also identified the main areas covered by the questions. We looked at research that had been done before to see what was already known about the questions. Then, we asked patients and healthcare professionals to prioritise the questions by doing a survey to reduce the list to the top 30 questions. Finally, we held a workshop where the top 10 research questions were agreed by a group of patients, carers and healthcare professionals.

Why did you conduct this research?

Health research helps to make decisions about care for the prevention, treatment, management and cure of illnesses. But there is not enough funding to research everything, so it is important that it makes a difference to everyday clinical practice as well as helping to make decisions about healthcare policy.

What was known before your paper was published?

The majority of patient safety research has been done in secondary care (for example, in a hospital) and although more primary care patient safety research has been done recently, this has mostly been about medication safety and errors.

Involving a wider range of people in health research can help to identify important areas of research that might not be known about otherwise.

What is next? What is the potential impact of the work in this paper? What will change as a result of this paper (or the study it describes)?

We shared the results from this study with a wide range of people and organisations. Our funders, the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR), were sent the results so they can use them to make decisions about research funding in the future.

Does this paper link in to a particular study / project? If so, please summarise the study and explain how this paper has improved understanding, or will move the study forward.

The top 10 research questions can be used by the NIHR to prioritise future areas of research funding and can also be used by researchers to identify priority areas to research.

We produced an [infographic about the James Lind Alliance project and the approach we used](#).