

NIHR Greater Manchester PSTRC

Plain English Publication Summary

Publication: [Leaving Hospital: A step too far for risk-based regulation?](#)

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Moore VL. Leaving Hospital: A step too far for risk-based regulation? Medical Law Review 2020;00: 01–22

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

Risk-based regulation is the approach used in health and social care regulation in England. The approach is used to focus regulators' attention on issues which pose the biggest risk to patient safety. To be successful, this approach needs all risks to patient safety to be identified, fully understood and prioritised by all regulators involved.

Because so many regulators are responsible for keeping patients safe during the hospital discharge process, it is virtually impossible for all of them to have the same understanding of the risk that the process poses to patient safety. This has resulted in a lack of regulatory action.

To fix this, regulators need to be able to identify the risk properly, then build a shared understanding of its causes and consequences, and prioritise it appropriately.

What did you do?

Author Victoria Moore read lots of publications by regulators and other organisations that are concerned with patient safety in England. This allowed her to:

- a. build a picture of what goes wrong in the discharge process, and
- b. see what actions had been taken by regulators in response.

The lack of actions led Victoria to question if there was a problem with the approach taken by regulators, and to dig deeper into regulation theory, and learn from other sectors. This helped her to understand and explain why regulation is failing to keep patients safe at discharge.

Why did you conduct this research?

This work is part of Victoria Moore's PhD research, which is examining the quality of regulatory responses to patient safety incidents that relate to hospital discharges. The role of regulation in improving patient safety during hospital discharge has been under-researched, so it's a great opportunity to see how regulation could really make a difference.

What was known before your paper was published?

Healthcare regulators are responsible for making sure that patients are safe, and for taking actions to improve patient safety issues. Although previous research has shown that patients who are discharged from hospital are at an increased risk of harm, regulators have taken little action in response. This research was done to understand why this is the case.

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)?

This paper provides a detailed exploration of the problem, but it does not provide a solution. The author will be doing further research to identify what a solution might be. It is hoped that the paper will inspire researchers who are interested in regulation theory and patient safety to do more research into hospital discharges.

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.

N/A