

Supplemental Study Information
Papercuts Project
Interview Guide
Family Physicians & Nurse Practitioners

Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview today. Have you read through the information sheet about the study? [If no, the RA will provide verbal overview.] Do you have any questions? [RA responds to questions raised].

The interview questions will help us to better understand administrative work in primary care. I will begin with some questions about administrative tasks you do in your day-to-day work. We are interested in learning about tasks which are directly related to patient care as well as those which are not (for example, broader clinic operations). We'd also like to discuss how administrative practices have changed over time.

We'll then talk more about what work feels productive in that it contributes to clinic operations or patient care, and what feels unproductive or unnecessarily time consuming. We'd like to hear your thoughts about what changes could be made so that your time is used efficiently, and what the impact of administrative burdens have been on you and the office team. Just so you know, there are about 17 main questions in this interview.

If you are ready, I would like to begin recording the interview now. [RA begins recording of Zoom call]. For our records, do I have your consent to start the interview? Thank you.

PART ONE

RA reviews participant's screening summary sheet and notes any clarifications/changes.

- 1. Can we start off with you briefly describing your practice setting?**
- 2. Can you tell me about your administrative work – what does that include?**
- 3. Have these tasks changed from when you started practicing? In what ways? Why?**
 - Prompt: Has there been an increase or decrease in time spent on those tasks from when you started practicing to now?
 - Prompt: Why do you think that is?

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- ◆ Changing patient demographics
- ◆ Increasing chronic illness or patient complexity
- ◆ Changing patient expectations
- ◆ Changing administrative processes required by other parts of the health system (e.g., forms, referral processes, IT platforms)
- ◆ Needs related to non-medical determinants of health and access to social supports

→ Prompt: Can you tell me about changes to admin tasks during COVID-19?

4. What role does gender play, if any, with respect to administrative workload?

→ Prompt: Do you think gender shapes patient expectations? How?

→ Prompt: Do you think gender shapes expectations for how work is shared among colleagues? Why is that?

5. Can you think of anything else about how others may perceive you - that could affect your administrative work?

(age, languages spoken, ethnicity in Canada, race, etc.)

6. Does administrative work impact the level of morale in your office? How so?

→ Prompt: Does administrative work impact your own morale?

→ Prompt: Has this changed over time? How? Why?

7. How has technology impacted your experiences coordinating administrative tasks?

→ Prompt: What are the barriers, if any, to using technology more efficiently in your practice?

→ Prompt: How does your EHR system shape your administrative work?

→ Prompt: Have you identified areas in which the system could be improved? Can you tell me more about that?

8. Do you spend time on administrative tasks outside of your regular work day? What does that look like for you?

→ Prompt: How do you feel about that?

→ Prompt: What strategies have you used in the past to decrease your “extra/overtime” hours?

→ Prompt: How did that go? What could be done differently if you tried something similar again?

9. Can you comment on whether or not your administrative work impacts your ability to engage in other professional interests? (for example: supervising/mentoring learners, *engaging in advocacy activities, *having time for your own professional development, *community involvement/public health education)

→ Prompt: Have you taken on more or fewer learners in your practice as the administrative burden has changed?

→ Prompt: Do you mentor your medical learners differently to adapt to administrative demands?

→ Prompt: If you have had to cut back or cut out *those activities altogether, how has that impacted you? How have others responded to this change?

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10. Can you tell me if other team members work with you to manage administrative tasks? What does that look like?

- Prompt: How do you communicate about this work within your team?
- Prompt: Are there additional roles other team members could take on?
- Prompt: What would need to happen to make that possible?

11. Who makes decisions about changes to administrative processes? How do changes play out?

- Prompt: Can you give me an example within your practice setting?
- Prompt: Can you give me an example of changes to administrative processes that were initiated by external organizations or practices?
- Prompt: Who is consulted about these changes?

Now, I'd like to go into further detail about some of the administrative work we've been discussing.

PART TWO**12. Reflecting back on what we just talked about, could you tell me which areas of administrative work feels most productive to you? (By productive, we mean good use of your time)**

- Prompt: This could include tasks that:
 - Support access to care for patients
 - Strengthen clinical relationships
 - Increase efficiency of your practice
 - Increase efficiency for the broader system

13. Which aspects of your administrative work are of greatest concern for you?

For each area of concern:

- What makes this an area of concern for you?
- How would you say the volume of this work has changed over time since you've been in practice?
- Do other team members help with this work?

14. Can you suggest any strategies that would make this more efficient for you?

- Are there low-value processes that can be reduced/eliminated/redirected?
- Are there ways to improve efficiency of processes?
- Are there opportunities to optimize distribution of workload within teams?

15. Are there strategies that could be implemented within your workplace, or would other systems or agencies need to be involved?

16. Have you tried 'new' strategies in the past? How did that go?

17. Do you feel that the administrative work you do is recognized and valued by others? Why? Why not?

WRAP UP

Do you have anything else you'd like to say about the administrative aspects of your practice?

RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION

We'd like to send you a cheque as a token of our appreciation for your time today.

Interviewer records mailing address

Thank you for speaking with me today.

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Interview Guide

Administrative Staff

Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview today. Have you read through the information sheet about the study? [If no, the RA will provide verbal overview.] Do you have any questions? [RA responds to questions raised.]

The interview questions will help us to better understand administrative work in primary care. I will begin with some questions about administrative tasks you do in your day-to-day work. We are interested in learning about tasks which are directly related to patient care as well as those which are not (for example, broader clinic operations). We'd also like to discuss how administrative practices have changed over time.

We'll then talk more about what work feels productive in that it contributes to clinic operations or patient care, and what feels unproductive or unnecessarily time consuming. We'd like to hear your thoughts about what changes could be made so that your time is used efficiently, and what the impact of administrative burdens have been on you and the office team. Just so you know, there are about 17 main questions in this interview.

I would like to begin recording this session now. Is that alright with you? [RA begins recording of Zoom call]. For our records, do I have your consent to start the interview? Thank you.

PART ONE

RA reviews participant's screening summary sheet and notes any clarifications/changes

1. What is your job title?

- Does that title fit with what you actually do in your role? Why, why not?

2. Could you tell me about the office where you work?

- How long have you been working there?
- Is it just you, or are there others on the administrative team?
- Briefly, how do their roles differ from yours?
- What training is provided?

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3. **We'll go into the details of your specific work responsibilities a little later, but for now, could you give me a brief overview of your tasks? Could you tell me what a typical work week is like for you?**
4. **Have these tasks changed over time since you've been working there? In what ways? Why?**
 - Prompt: Has there been an increase or decrease in time spent on those tasks from when you started working there to now?
 - Prompt: Why do you think that is?
 - ◆ Changing patient demographics
 - ◆ Increasing chronic illness or patient complexity
 - ◆ Changing patient expectations
 - ◆ Changing administrative processes required by other parts of the health system (e.g., forms, referral processes, IT platforms)
 - ◆ Needs related to non-medical determinants of health and access to social supports
 - Prompt: Can you tell me about changes to admin tasks during COVID-19?
5. **What role does gender play, if any, with respect to administrative workload?**
 - Prompt: Do you think gender shapes patient expectations or how patients treat you?
 - Prompt: Do you think gender shapes expectations for how work is shared among colleagues?
6. **Can you think of anything else about how others may perceive you - that could affect your administrative work?** (age, languages spoken, ethnicity in Canada, race, etc.)
7. **Do you feel that the administrative work you do is recognized and valued by others? Why? Why not?**
8. **Back to administrative tasks now - Which of your administrative activities do you enjoy most? Why?**
9. **Which of your tasks, if any, do you find challenging? Why?**
10. **How has technology impacted your experiences coordinating those administrative tasks?**
 - Prompt: What are the barriers, if any, to using technology more efficiently in your office?
 - Prompt: How does your EHR system shape your administrative work?
 - Prompt: Have you identified areas in which the system could be improved? Can you tell me more about that?

11. Is anyone else in the office familiar enough with your admin responsibilities to cover for you?

→ Prompt: How has that worked? What was the impact?

12. What happens when staff who have administrative responsibilities come and go?

→ Prompts: Who manages the training?

◆ How has that gone in the past?

→ Prompts: Do you have an office procedures manual? Can you tell me more about that?

◆ Who maintains it?

◆ How is that going?/ Is it used often?

◆ Have there been any challenges along the way? Can you tell me more about that?

13. Do you have team meetings?**If yes**

→ Prompt: How often; what topics are discussed?

→ Prompt: Are your comments/suggestions listened to and acted on?

→ Prompt: Can you tell me more about that?

→ Prompt: What kinds of changes have been made to office procedures as a result of these meetings and who initiated the changes?

→ Prompt: Anything else you'd like to say about team meetings?

If no

→ Prompt: Why is that?

→ Prompt: Did you ever have team meetings – what happened and why?

→ Prompt: Do you chat informally and does that work well for you? Why, Why not?

→ Prompt: Is there anything else you'd like to say about office communication and how it affects your work?

PART TWO**14. Reflecting back on what we just talked about, could you tell me which areas of administrative work feels most productive to you?**

a. Prompt: This could include tasks that:

i. Support access to care for patients

ii. Strengthen patient and other relationships

iii. Increase efficiency of the office / practice

iv. Increase efficiency for the broader system

15. Which areas of administrative work are of greatest concern for you?**For each area of concern:**

- a. What makes this an area of concern for you?
- b. How would you say the volume of this work has changed over time since you've been working there?
- c. What is your process?
- d. Do other team members help with this work?
- e. Can you suggest any strategies that would make this more efficient for you?
 - Are there low-value processes that can be reduced/eliminated?
 - Are there ways to improve efficiency of processes?
- f. Are there opportunities to optimize distribution of workload within teams?
- g. Are these strategies that could be implemented within your workplace, or would other systems or agencies need to be involved?
- h. Have you tried new strategies in the past? How did that go?

16. Do you have anything else you'd like to tell us about your work in the office?**17. Is there anything else you think is important for us to know?****Research Administration:**

We'd like to send you a token of our appreciation for your time today.

What address should we send it to?

Thank you so much for speaking with me today.