

The International Section

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International Editor

Welcome to the international section of the London Journal of Primary Care. In this section we will be exploring primary care internationally as it relates to us here in the UK.

London is a special place. It is large and heavily populated. There are many different cultures, languages and ethnicities. Issues like homelessness, drugs and prostitution affect some patients, while house prices, congestion charges and work stress affect others.

All of this affects how we provide health care here. London GPs may have developed skills and approaches particular to the capital.

Some of these experiences will be common to primary care doctors in other countries. There may be much we may learn from such colleagues.

Many of the communities we serve here are first, second or even third generation immigrants. There may be useful research from their countries of origin relevant to these communities.

Many British GPs have worked abroad in a variety of different teaching and clinical roles. Such doctors will have no doubt brought a wealth of experience back with them, but would have also taken a wealth of experience out with them.

This section will explore these international themes that relate to London general practice. To help potential contributors direct their ideas towards the needs of our readership, we have devised the following broad categories of article that we will accept.

Original research articles

We are interested in publishing original research based in primary care from anywhere in the world, providing it is relevant to general practice in the UK. There are two ways in which we feel that research will be relevant.

i) Research from the countries of origin of immigrant communities currently present in Britain will often be relevant. This will encompass a wide range of research; for example a study on attitudes to breastfeeding in Somalia will be considered relevant to Somalian patients in the UK.

ii) Other types of relevant research articles include those relating to modern healthcare challenges faced by GPs and other primary healthcare workers. Such challenges include healthcare issues relating to refugees, drug abusers, commercial sex workers or the homeless. An example of this could be an article on how nurse practitioners tackle STDs in teenagers in a South African

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Such research would not have to share some ethnic link to UK populations.

Reflections on international experience

The second type of article we are interested in are reflective accounts on international experiences in primary healthcare. We wish to explore what defines the UK general practitioner, and how we differ from primary care workers in the rest of the world. We also want articles that give insight into healthcare from quite different contexts. Many UK GPs have worked in other countries. What skills did these doctors bring when they worked abroad, and what did skills they lack compared to the doctors out there? How did their experience change their approach to work on their return? We are interested in insights into healthcare from different contexts that help us reflect on the good and bad we have here.

Such articles could be written by GPs who go abroad to work, but an alternative viewpoint could be also provided by GPs who have trained abroad, but have now settled in the UK. Included within this theme would be accounts of international primary care education and development. Several projects to enhance and develop primary care systems abroad have originated in London, for example the MRCGP International. Finally we would consider articles from primary healthcare workers anywhere in the world who, through describing their struggle to provide healthcare in adverse circumstances, enable us to reflect on the positive aspects of the system and resources we have here.

We look forward to your contributions.