

Are you using up-to-date data on multimorbidity?

I READ WITH INTEREST the good viewpoint article by Sathanapally et al on the importance and challenges of shared decision making in people with multimorbidity (*AJGP* June 2018).¹ I would like to point out that there are more recent data on the reported prevalence of complex multimorbidity in Australia. The authors cited the 2016 study by Harrison et al.² The same research group published a further sub-study of the nationally representative Bettering the Evaluation and Care of Health (BEACH) program in March 2017. In this more recent analysis, with 1449 general practitioners (GPs) and a total of 43,501 patients, it was found that the proportion of patients with complex multimorbidity was 30.4%. After adjustment, Harrison et al estimated that 12.1% of the Australian population had complex multimorbidity.³

Also in 2017, data on multimorbidity in Australia from 'The 45 and Up Study' were evaluated. Of 90,352 participants, 52% were identified with multimorbidity. In this analysis on the prevalence of multimorbidity, Lujic et al from the University of New South Wales compared self-report data, medication data and hospital data.⁴ This study, available at <http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0183817>, is certainly interesting for regular *AJGP* readers. Furthermore, the authors cite an older English study,⁵ which found that 78% of primary care consultations in the UK were with patients with multimorbidity. A recent retrospective cohort study in England involving 403,985 adult patients came to the conclusion that 52.9% of general

practice consultations in the study sample were patients with multimorbidity.⁶

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Reply

Thank you for highlighting some further, more recent data with similar results to the literature cited in our viewpoint article, highlighting the spread of complex multimorbidity in the Australian population.^{1,2} We would also like to add that the article published in the *British*

Journal of General Practice in March 2018 regarding the 'epidemiology of multimorbidity in primary care' in the UK³ was not cited in this viewpoint article, as we had written and submitted our article for publication prior to the publication of the aforementioned article.

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