

# How continuity of care is saving lives

Patients who see the same doctor are less likely to die prematurely

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1 Comment

Patients who see the same doctor have lower rates of premature death, according to the first systematic review of continuity of care and mortality.

The analysis of 22 studies from nine countries with different health systems found that all patients appear to benefit from continuity of care, whether they are seeing a GP or a specialist.

Eighteen of the studies found that people who saw the same doctor over time had significantly lower death rates.

Previous work has shown that continuity of care in general practice is associated with greater patient satisfaction, improved health promotion, increased adherence to medication and reduced hospital visits.

Despite the observational nature of the latest study, researchers from the University of Exeter in the UK believe they have the evidence to show that these outcomes can be extended to mortality rates.

“Continuity of care is associated with patients perceiving that the doctor has become more responsive,” the authors write in *BMJ Open*.

“Patients then disclose more and medical management is more likely to be tailored to the needs of the patient as a person.”

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The fact that the findings are consistent in nine countries, across three continents, and in very different populations and healthcare systems “implies a basic human effect”, say the authors.

Continuity of care should be prioritised in health policy, they conclude.

You can access the study [here](#).

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