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The use of quality circles as a tool in the taking over of practices by young general practitioners

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Background and Aims: Although informal meetings of healthcare professionals in smaller groups are common in the area of primary care in the Czech Republic, there is no use of the method known as Quality Circles. The Aim of our project is to use this method to help new general practitioners when they take over a medical practice, and to suggest measures to improve the organization and overall attractiveness of the practice, as well as patient satisfaction.

Methods: For the purposes of this observation, an already existing informal group formed by healthcare professionals and their trainees. The group met a total of four times in a six-month period. In the first meeting, problematic areas were identified. In the second, specific issues of newly starting to practice were discussed, with time to consider suggestions for improvements. The third meeting consisted of an analysis of the suggested measures and their implementation, and in the fourth, these measures and their effects were evaluated.

Results: On the basis of the discussion in the first and second meetings, suggestions were made, and then, during the third meeting, structured into three dimensions: The organization of work, including clinical activities, The attractiveness of the practice and employee satisfaction The satisfaction of employees. In each area, specific measures were proposed. The new doctors' feedback in the fourth phase of the project was positive. The main problems the new doctors faced were related to their lack of knowledge and experience with buying or starting their own practice, as well as being an effective team leader.

Conclusion: Despite the application of small groups being significantly larger, it was demonstrated that if practitioners are given direction and clear goals in their meetings, these meetings can be very constructive. Small groups thus offer a good platform for young GPs in starting their own practice, giving them the capacity to do so.