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Preventive health consultations with disadvantaged 20-44-year-old patients in general practice, Denmark. The general practitioners experiences. Questionnaire and focus group interview

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Background and Aim: Politically and in general practice the role of general practitioners (GPs) in preventive health consultations is discussed. The attitude of GP's is important. In a randomised controlled trial 27 GPs had preventive health consultations with 211 younger disadvantaged patients. The participants had difficulty in finding solutions, bad self-rated health, lack of security, lack of confidence in family and extreme stress. During two consultations (60 and 20 minutes) they chose one or two health-related goals and discussed resources and barriers for reaching them. The GPs followed courses for about 50 hours regarding motivational interviewing, social and psychological aspects of health-related changes with focus on life style and resources.

Method: After the project period (1998-99) a questionnaire (Q) was answered by 25 of the GPs and focus group interview with 11 GPs in 2 groups was performed.

Results: The GPs found the courses very important to enable them to change the focus from risk of disease to resources for health-related changes. The GPs found the study relevant. The questionnaire, completed at home by the patients, facilitated patients autonomy and motivational interviewing in order to support personal goals. 22 of the 25 GPs achieved better understanding of the patients' resources and agenda. 21 focused more on resources after the project period. GP's requested further evidence of the effect of preventive health consultations.

Conclusion: GPs want courses in motivational interviewing before offering preventive health consultations. Evidence for effect might support the GPs' motivation for preventive work. Further research on GPs' motivation to conduct preventive health consultations is needed.