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Are we meeting needs of children with complex health needs in the primary care UK

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In the UK, while GPs continue to improve their health services in terms of care and capacity to make their patients feel healthier. But there is group of population particularly growing British children who for various reasons suffer from complex medical problems has shown a dissatisfying experience of health care in the primary care. This is further complicated by rigid appointment system in the general practice which can be frustrating for the families with children with complex health needs and disabilities. This not only affects the quality of care provided to this focused group but also negatively influence the healthy relationship of these patients with their GPs. This experience led us to conclude that having needs unmet in the general practice, these children were using disproportional amount of resources in the secondary care. This creates an additional constrain on the National Health Services of the UK and fragmented continuity of care at primary and secondary care.

This important theme was identified in our patient satisfaction surveys, talking to the patients and reviewing our feedback and complaints. We wanted to address this issue by re-organising how we work. That included a team work of strategic planning, involving secondary care professionals, and community nursing team to bring up innovative ideas to provide quality of care to this focus group near to their homes.

To support their ongoing medical needs, each individual in the focus group is given a unique 'health passport' designed to address their current health issues and avoid delay in their treatment. This passport entitles them an 'Open access' in the general practice' where these individuals are seen by their GPs immediately to avoid deterioration of their condition and subsequent hospital admissions.

This bright idea reflected positively in subsequent patient surveys and local health statistics. Hence, an hurdle in the health care of this focus group is overcome by changing our working pattern and providing more passionate service to our patients. This fascinating effort has helped us to establish a strong working links among multidisciplinary team and enjoy better doctor-patient relationship.