THE CHALLENGES OF MEDICAL PRACTICE VARIATIONS

ECONOMIC ISSUES IN HEALTH CARE

General editors

Professor Gavin Mooney
Institute of Social Medicine
University of Copenhagen
2200 Copenhagen N, Denmark

Dr Alistair McGuire
Centre for of Socio-Legal Studies,
and Pembroke College
University of Oxford
Oxford OX2 6UD, England

The Challenges of Medical Practice Variations

Edited by Tavs Folmer Andersen and Gavin Mooney (1990)

Private Exchange and Public Interest

By John Forbes (1990)

Why Wait? Tackling Waiting Lists in the NHS

Edited by Stephen J. Frankel and R. R. West (1990)

Just Managing—Power and Culture in the NHS

By Stephen Harrison, David J. Hunter and Gordon Marnoch (1990)

Dental Care: An Economic View

By David Parkin and Brian Yule (1990)

THE CHALLENGES OF MEDICAL PRACTICE VARIATIONS

Edited by

Tavs Folmer Andersen

and

Gavin Mooney

*Institute of Social Medicine
University of Copenhagen, Denmark*

M

MACMILLAN
PRESS

Scientific & Medical

© The editors and contributors 1990

All rights reserved. No reproduction, copy or transmission of this publication may be made without written permission.

No paragraph of this publication may be reproduced, copied or transmitted save with written permission or in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright Act 1956 (as amended), or under the terms of any licence permitting limited copying issued by the Copyright Licensing Agency, 33–4 Alfred Place, London WC1E 7DP.

Any person who does any unauthorised act in relation to this publication may be liable to criminal prosecution and civil claims for damages.

First published 1990

Published by
THE MACMILLAN PRESS LTD
Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 2XS
and London
Companies and representatives
throughout the world

Filmset by
Wearside Tradespools, Fulwell, Sunderland

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
The challenges of medical practice variations.
1. Medicine. Decision making. International aspects
I. Andersen, T. Folmer (Tavs Folmer) II. Mooney,
Gavin, 1943– III. Series
610

ISBN 978-0-333-47509-6 ISBN 978-1-349-20781-7 (eBook)
DOI 10.1007/978-1-349-20781-7

Contents

<i>Preface</i>	vii
<i>The Contributors</i>	viii
1. Medical practice variations: Where are we?	1
<i>Tavs Folmer Andersen and Gavin Mooney</i>	
2. Why do variations occur?	16
<i>Klim McPherson</i>	
3. Variations in outcomes research	36
<i>Leslie L. Roos, Ruth Brazauskas, Marsha M. Cohen and Sandra M. Sharp</i>	
4. Medical decision making and practice variation	59
<i>Albert G. Mulley, Jr.</i>	
5. Equity and variability in modern health care	76
<i>Gwyn Bevan</i>	
6. Measuring performance in the health care sector: The whys and the hows	95
<i>Alistair McGuire</i>	
7. The dog in the night-time: Medical practice variations and health policy	117
<i>Robert G. Evans</i>	
8. Variations from a lay perspective	153
<i>Frede Vestergaard</i>	
9. On the need for outcomes research and the prospects for the evaluative clinical sciences	158
<i>John E. Wennberg</i>	

10. Promoting clinical policy change: Using the art to promote the science in medicine	174
<i>Jonathan Lomas</i>	
11. Challenges facing modern health care	192
<i>Gavin Mooney and Tavs Folmer Andersen</i>	
Index	201

Preface

The objective of *The Challenges of Medical Practice Variations* is to stimulate debate about the research and policy implications of the variations in medical practices from various perspectives, including efficiency, equity and effectiveness, but also health policy, health service management, clinical practice and the role of the medical profession. The focus is international but, in particular, European.

The book has been a genuinely joint process not only by the editors, but also by all the contributors. That is wholly appropriate, as it is our view that the challenge of medical practice variation does not only lie with the medical profession, nor only with medical research: variation involves many facets and many disciplines and professions.

The publication of this book, which is the first dealing solely with the topic of medical practice variation, is also the joint product of the efforts of the staff and board of the CCC – the Copenhagen Collaborating Center for the Study of Regional Variations in Health Care. To all of them, past and present, we owe a special debt.

The process involved in preparing the book may be worth mentioning. As editors we drew up a series of outlines for the contributions we sought and then got the agreement of the authors we had selected to write them. We wrote the introductory chapter and circulated this to all the contributors. They submitted synopses of their chapters, on which we commented, and then wrote their chapters which again we commented on before this final product emerged.

Finally, we should like to thank Maria Kapitzke and Annelise Nielsen for their secretarial assistance in the preparation of manuscripts.

Copenhagen, May 1989

T.F.A.
G.M.

The Contributors

Tavs Folmer Andersen

Copenhagen Collaborating Center
Institute of Social Medicine
University of Copenhagen
Panum Institute
Blegdamsvej 3
2200 Copenhagen N
Denmark

Gwyn Bevan

Department of Community Medicine
St. Thomas's Hospital
London SE1 7EH
England

Ruth Brazauskas

Department of Business Administration
Faculty of Management
University of Manitoba
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3T 2N2
Canada

Marsha M Cohen

Department of Community Health Sciences
Faculty of Medicine
University of Manitoba
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3T 2N2
Canada

Robert G Evans

Department of Economics
University of British Columbia
400-2194 Health Sciences Mall
Vancouver, B.C. V6T 1Z6
Canada

Jonathan Lomas

Department of Clinical Epidemiology and Biostatistics
Faculty of Medicine
McMaster University
Hamilton, Ontario L8S 4M4
Canada

Alistair McGuire

Centre for Socio-Legal Studies, and Pembroke College
University of Oxford
Oxford OX2 6UD
England

Klim McPherson

Department of Community Medicine
Oxford University
Gibson Labs Radcliffe Infirmary
Oxford OX2 6HE
England

Gavin Mooney

Institute of Social Medicine
University of Copenhagen
Panum Institute
Blegdamsvej 3
2200 Copenhagen N
Denmark

Albert G Mulley, Jr.

General Internal Medicine
Massachusetts General Hospital
Fruit Street
Boston, MA 02114
USA

Leslie L Roos

Department of Business Administration
Faculty of Management
University of Manitoba
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3T 2N2
Canada

Sandra M Sharp

Department of Business Administration
Faculty of Management
University of Manitoba
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3T 2N2
Canada

Frede Vestergaard

Berlingske Weekendnews
G1. Mønt 1
1147 Copenhagen K
Denmark

John E Wennberg

Department of Community and Family Medicine
Dartmouth Medical School
Hanover, NH 03755
USA