**Title**

The Effectiveness of Quality Incentive Payments in General Practice (EQuIP-GP) Trial

**Background**

There is international interest in whether improved care in general practice for patients with chronic or complex conditions can lead to decreased use of health resources; including whether financial incentives help achieve those goals.

**Aims**

The RACGP funded EQuIP-GP trial will evaluate the impact of a new service model, comprising financial incentives for enrolment with a preferred general practitioner, longer consultations, same day access and structured follow-up after hospitalisation, on the quality of care and health-service utilisation for at-risk patients.

**Method**

A cluster-randomised trial set within practice-based research networks in three Australian states. The trial aims to recruit 36 practices with patient participants comprising a) 540 older patients (over 65 years); b) 540 aged 18-65 years with chronic and/or complex conditions; and c) 720 patients aged < 16 years with increased risk of hospitalisation. The primary outcome is patient-perceived relational-continuity. Secondary outcomes include: health-related quality of life; health-service use; cost; and mortality.

**Results**

The incentives system has been developed, ethics approval received and recruitment commenced. The financial incentives encourage ongoing continuous quality improvement relative to current practice: GP incentive payments are paid proportional to downstream expected health system costs savings from improvement in quality of care including reduction in unnecessary prescribing, tests and potentially avoidable hospitalisations.

**Conclusion**

The trial will provide evidence on a policy relevant approach to providing continuous GP incentives for quality of care improvement which can be compared to pay-for-performance experiences in the UK, the patent-centred medical home model in the United States and the Australian Government ‘Health Care Homes’ trial.

**References** (If applicable)