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Dunbar, J. A., Reddy, P., McAvoy, B. R., Carter, R. C., Schoo, A. M., Colgan, S. J., Weller, D. P. and Torneus, I. 2007, *The contribution of approaches to organisational change in optimising the primary health care workforce*, Australian Primary Health Care Research Institute, Canberra.

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THE CONTRIBUTION OF APPROACHES TO ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE IN OPTIMISING THE PRIMARY CARE WORKFORCE

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POLICY CONTEXT

Australia is facing long term workforce shortages coupled with a population increasingly burdened with chronic disease. The National Chronic Disease Strategy recognises the central role general practice has to play in the prevention, detection and management of chronic illness.

Implementing the strategy will require considerable change in the way general practice teams work. Organisational development (OD) is used in businesses to improve how individuals and organisations perform in achieving organisational objectives. We assessed how these practices could be used in a general practice setting.

KEY FINDINGS

- [OD is widely used in the general economy](#) but its use in health services, especially primary care, is less evident
- Efforts to change clinical practice by influencing individuals have proved ineffective unless the organisation within which they work is ready to change
- Performance in health care organisations is inextricably linked to leadership, culture, climate and collaboration
- OD can contribute to better chronic disease management
 - through the [Collaboratives methodology](#)
 - by improving teamwork, communication, integration, coordination
 - by building clinical networks across organisational boundaries.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- The establishment of a small, expert centre for [clinical leadership](#)
 - to work with leading Divisions and practices on real change problems in real time
 - to optimise delivery of chronic disease management across organisational boundaries
 - to adapt the [Quality Team Development](#) program for Australia.

For more details, go to the [three page report](#).

The research reported in this paper is a project of the Australian Primary Health Care Research Institute, which is supported by a grant from the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing under the Primary Health Care Research, Evaluation and Development Strategy. The information and opinions contained in it do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing.