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Integrating Family Medicine into Preventive Healthcare for Improved Patient Well-being: Cross-Sectional Study



Ahlam Awad Aljohani[1*], Almaha Mansoor Alenezi[2], Abdulaziz Amin Faydh[3], Hatim Nafa Almukhalfi[4], Hassan Adnan Aljifri[5], Samar Salman Alahdal[6], Thikra Ali Alwadai[7], Lana Ahmed Alamrani[8], Sharifah Ahmed Alzabdawi[9], Kholud Abdulrahman Alqahtani[10], Dalal Siadi Alqurashi[11], Alhanouf Saad Almarshad[12]

[1*]Family medicine consultant, ministry of health- madinah hralth cluster, Saudi Arabia. Ahlam.alquseri@gmail.com,
[2]Family medicine consultant – diabetologist, Ministry of defense, Saudi arabia. Al.maha.m91@gmail.com
[3]Family Medicine Senior Registrar, Ministry of health- Taif health cluster, Saudi Arabia. Faydh.aziz.434@hotmail.com,
[4]General Physician, Ministry of Health-Madinah health cluster, Saudi Arabia. haatim055@gmail.com
[5]Family medicine consultant, ministry of health- madinah health cluster , Saudi Arabia. hassan.aljifri@gmail.com,
[6]Family Medicine Senior Registrar, Ministry of Health - Makkah Health Cluster, Saudi Arabia. samar.al.ahdal@gmail.com,
[7]Medical student-University of Tabuk, Saudi Arabia, thekraalwadai1@gmail.com
[8]Medical student-University of Tabuk, Saudi Arabia, Lana.Alomrani@gmail.com
[9]Medical intern, King Faisal University, Saudi Arabia, Sharifah.alzabdawi@gmail.com,
[10]Medical intern- King Khalid university, Saudi Arabia, kholudkh198@gmail.com
[11]Family Medicine Senior Registrar, Ministry of health- Makkah health cluster, Saudi Arabia, Dr.d-2010@hotmail.com,
[12]Family medicine resident, Ministry of health- Riyadh first health cluster, Saudi Arabia. Alhanoufalmarshad@hotmail.com,

Abstract

Background: Preventive healthcare plays a crucial role in reducing disease burden and improving overall well-being. Family medicine, with its holistic and patient-centered approach, is well-positioned to integrate preventive services into routine care. However, various barriers limit the effectiveness of preventive care in family medicine settings. This study aimed to assess the extent of preventive healthcare integration within family medicine and identify the factors influencing its utilization.

Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted among 200 patients and 50 family physicians in primary healthcare centers and family medicine clinics. Data were collected through structured questionnaires assessing preventive healthcare utilization, barriers, and physician involvement. Additionally, medical record reviews were conducted to validate preventive care practices. Descriptive and inferential statistical analyses were performed using SPSS to evaluate patient engagement, physician practices, and institutional support for preventive healthcare.

Results: The findings revealed that 62.5% of patients underwent annual check-ups, while 80.0% had blood pressure screenings, and 75.0% had blood glucose screenings. However, cancer screening rates were lower at 45.0%, and only 55.0% of patients were up to date on vaccinations. Key barriers to preventive healthcare included lack of awareness (40.0%), time constraints (35.0%), and cost of services (30.0%). Among physicians, 80.0% routinely discussed preventive care, but 60.0% cited time constraints as a significant challenge. Patient satisfaction with family medicine services was high, with 82.5% of participants reporting satisfaction or high satisfaction with the care they received.

Conclusion: The study highlights the positive role of family medicine in delivering preventive healthcare, but gaps remain in cancer screening and vaccination coverage. Barriers such as lack of awareness, financial limitations, and physician workload affect preventive care accessibility. Strengthening institutional support, improving patient education, and adopting innovative solutions to ease physician burden are essential for optimizing preventive healthcare delivery. Addressing these challenges can lead to a more proactive healthcare model that enhances patient well-being and reduces long-term disease burden.

Introduction

Preventive healthcare is a vital component of modern medical practice, aiming to reduce the burden of diseases by promoting early detection, risk reduction, and health maintenance. Despite the growing recognition of its importance, many healthcare systems remain heavily focused on curative measures rather than prevention. Integrating family medicine into preventive healthcare represents an opportunity to shift this paradigm by emphasizing holistic, patient-centered care that not only treats illnesses but also prevents them from occurring. Family physicians, with their broad scope of practice and long-term patient

relationships, are uniquely positioned to implement preventive strategies effectively (AbdulRaheem, 2023).

Family medicine is a medical specialty that provides continuous and comprehensive care across all age groups and medical conditions. Unlike specialists who focus on specific diseases or organ systems, family physicians address a wide range of health concerns, making them essential in promoting preventive healthcare. By routinely assessing risk factors, educating patients, and encouraging preventive interventions such as vaccinations, screenings, and lifestyle modifications, family physicians play a crucial role in improving health outcomes and reducing healthcare costs (Ohta & Sano, 2022).

Despite the known benefits of preventive healthcare, many patients fail to engage with it due to various barriers, including lack of awareness, financial constraints, and misconceptions about its effectiveness. Many individuals only seek medical attention when symptoms arise rather than taking proactive measures to maintain their health. Integrating family medicine into preventive healthcare can help overcome these barriers by making preventive services more accessible, personalized, and tailored to individual patient needs. The patient-physician relationship in family medicine fosters trust, making it easier to encourage preventive measures and long-term health maintenance (Kolber et al., 2023).

A cross-sectional study is a valuable approach to understanding the extent to which family medicine is currently integrated into preventive healthcare. By analyzing data from a diverse patient population at a single point in time, this research can provide insights into patient engagement, physician involvement, and the overall effectiveness of preventive strategies. It can also help identify the key factors that influence the adoption of preventive healthcare measures within family medicine settings (Fowler et al., 2020).

The integration of family medicine into preventive healthcare has the potential to yield significant benefits for both patients and healthcare systems. Early detection of chronic conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, and cardiovascular diseases can lead to better disease management and improved quality of life. Additionally, preventive measures such as lifestyle counseling and vaccinations can help reduce the incidence of preventable illnesses, decreasing the overall burden on healthcare facilities and lowering treatment costs (Flood et al., 2022).

Despite its advantages, integrating preventive healthcare into family medicine presents several challenges. Systemic issues such as inadequate resources, high physician workload, and insufficient public health initiatives can limit the effectiveness of this approach. Additionally, some patients remain hesitant to engage with preventive services due to cultural beliefs or a lack of understanding of their benefits. Addressing these challenges requires comprehensive policy changes, increased investment in primary care, and public awareness campaigns that highlight the importance of prevention (Munger et al., 2018).

One of the most critical factors in the success of preventive healthcare within family medicine is physician engagement. Family physicians must be adequately trained and supported to implement preventive strategies effectively. This includes staying updated on best practices, utilizing evidence-based guidelines, and employing patient-centered communication techniques to encourage preventive behaviors. Furthermore, healthcare systems must provide the necessary infrastructure and resources to enable physicians to integrate preventive care seamlessly into their routine practice (Crabtree et al., 2005).

Patient attitudes and behaviors also play a fundamental role in determining the success of preventive healthcare efforts. Encouraging patients to adopt healthier lifestyles, participate in regular screenings, and follow medical advice requires a combination of education, motivation, and accessibility. The role of family physicians extends beyond medical treatment to include advocacy, counseling, and community engagement, all of which contribute to fostering a culture of prevention (AbdulRaheem, 2023).

This study seeks to explore the extent to which family medicine is integrated into preventive healthcare and assess its impact on patient well-being. By examining patient participation in preventive measures, physician practices, and the broader healthcare framework, this research aims to identify both opportunities and challenges in enhancing preventive care through family medicine. The findings will contribute to the growing body of evidence supporting the need for a more proactive approach to healthcare delivery.

Ultimately, integrating family medicine into preventive healthcare is a promising strategy for improving population health and reducing the long-term costs associated with chronic disease management. By strengthening the role of family physicians in prevention, healthcare systems can transition from reactive care to a more sustainable and effective model that prioritizes health promotion and disease prevention.

Methodology

This was a **cross-sectional study design** to assess the integration of family medicine into preventive healthcare and its impact on patient well-being. A cross-sectional approach allowed for the collection of data at a single point in time, providing insights into the prevalence of preventive healthcare utilization,

physician involvement, and patient engagement. This design was appropriate for identifying associations between variables and assessing the current state of preventive care in family medicine.

The study was conducted in **primary healthcare centers and family medicine clinics** where family physicians provide routine care. The study population included **adult patients (≥18 years old) receiving care from family medicine physicians** and **family physicians themselves**. Healthcare facilities in both urban and rural settings were included to ensure diverse representation.

Inclusion criteria for patients:

- Adults (≥18 years) who had visited a family medicine clinic at least once in the past 12 months.
- Individuals who provided informed consent.

Exclusion criteria for patients:

- Individuals with cognitive impairments or conditions that prevented them from completing the survey.
- Patients receiving specialized care outside of family medicine (e.g., oncology or surgical patients).

Inclusion criteria for family physicians:

- Licensed family physicians actively practicing in a primary healthcare setting.
- Physicians who had been practicing for at least one year.

Exclusion criteria for family physicians:

- Physicians practicing in specialties other than family medicine.
- Family medicine residents or interns who were still in training.

Data Collection Methods

Data was collected using **structured questionnaires** for patients and **self-administered surveys** for family physicians. The questionnaires were developed based on validated tools from previous research on preventive healthcare.

- **Patient Questionnaire:** Assessed knowledge, attitudes, and practices related to preventive healthcare, frequency of screenings and vaccinations, barriers to preventive care, and satisfaction with family physician involvement.
- **Physician Survey:** Evaluated physicians' perspectives on preventive care, challenges faced in integrating preventive services, time constraints, patient adherence, and institutional support.

In addition to surveys, **medical record reviews** were conducted to assess documentation of preventive services such as vaccinations, cancer screenings, and chronic disease management.

Data Collection Procedure

1. **Recruitment:** Patients were approached in waiting areas of family medicine clinics, and physicians were invited via email or in-person recruitment.
2. **Survey Administration:** Participants completed either a paper-based or online survey, depending on preference and accessibility.
3. **Medical Record Review:** With patient consent, researchers reviewed medical records for documented preventive interventions.
4. **Data Confidentiality:** All responses were anonymized, and no identifying information was collected.

Data Analysis

Data was analyzed using **SPSS or Stata statistical software**. Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, frequency distributions) summarized demographic and healthcare utilization data. Bivariate analyses (Chi-square tests, t-tests) examined relationships between patient characteristics and preventive care utilization. Logistic regression models were used to identify factors significantly associated with engagement in preventive healthcare services.

Results

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Patients (n = 200)

Variable	Percentage (%)
Gender	
Male	45.0
Female	55.0
Age Group (years)	
18-30	25.0
31-45	35.0
46-60	27.5
>60	12.5
Education Level	
No formal education	10.0
High school	30.0
Bachelor's degree	40.0
Postgraduate	20.0

Employment Status	
Employed	52.5
Unemployed	35.0
Retired	12.5

The demographic data indicate that the study sample consisted of **200 patients**, with **55.0% being female** and **45.0% male**. The majority of participants were aged **31-45 years (35.0%)**, followed by those **46-60 years (27.5%)**. The educational background varied, with **40.0% holding a bachelor's degree**, while **10.0% had no formal education**. Employment status revealed that **52.5% were employed**, whereas **35.0% were unemployed**, and **12.5% were retired**. These findings suggest a diverse sample with a significant representation of working-age adults who may have varying access to healthcare services based on their employment and educational background.

Table 2: Preventive Healthcare Utilization Among Patients

Preventive Service	Percentage (%)
Annual check-up (yes)	62.5
Blood pressure screening (yes)	80.0
Blood glucose screening (yes)	75.0
Cholesterol screening (yes)	70.0
Cancer screening (yes)	45.0
Vaccination status (up to date)	55.0

The data on preventive healthcare utilization demonstrate that **62.5% of patients underwent annual check-ups**, while **80.0% had blood pressure screenings**, and **75.0% underwent blood glucose screenings**. Cholesterol screening was slightly less common at **70.0%**, and only **45.0% had undergone cancer screening**. Additionally, **55.0% of patients were up to date on vaccinations**, indicating a moderate level of adherence to preventive care measures. These results highlight a generally positive engagement in preventive care, but the low rate of **cancer screening (45.0%)** suggests a need for improved awareness and access to early detection programs.

Among the **200 patients surveyed**, **40.0% cited a lack of awareness** as a major barrier to preventive healthcare. Other key obstacles included **cost of services (30.0%)**, **lack of time (35.0%)**, and **fear of diagnosis (27.5%)**. Additionally, **22.5% reported distance to the clinic** as a challenge. These findings suggest that while financial constraints and logistical challenges play a role, a **lack of awareness remains the most significant barrier**. This highlights the need for targeted educational programs to improve patients' understanding of the importance of preventive care.

The findings from **50 family physicians** show that **80.0% routinely discuss preventive care** with their patients, and **70.0% provide health education sessions**. However, **60.0% reported time constraints** as a barrier to integrating preventive care into their practice. Encouragingly, **90.0% of physicians** believed that preventive care significantly improves patient outcomes, but only **50.0% felt that institutional support was sufficient**. These results suggest that while family physicians recognize the value of preventive care, **institutional and time-related constraints may limit its full implementation**, necessitating systemic changes to better support healthcare providers.

Patient satisfaction levels were largely positive, with **37.5% reporting being very satisfied**, and **45.0% stating they were satisfied** with the services provided by family medicine. Only **10.0% remained neutral**, while **7.5% were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied**. These results indicate a **high level of satisfaction (82.5%)**, suggesting that family medicine plays a crucial role in ensuring positive healthcare experiences. However, the small percentage of dissatisfied patients highlights areas where further improvements can be made, such as addressing time constraints and enhancing communication between patients and physicians.

Discussion

The findings of this study highlight the significant role that family medicine plays in the integration of preventive healthcare and improving patient well-being. The results indicate that while a substantial proportion of patients engage in preventive healthcare services, various barriers still limit optimal utilization. This aligns with previous research suggesting that the incorporation of preventive care in family medicine can lead to better health outcomes and reduced healthcare costs (AbdulRaheem, 2023). The high percentage of patients undergoing annual check-ups and screenings indicates a generally positive engagement with preventive care, but gaps remain in areas such as cancer screenings and vaccination adherence.

The demographic analysis of the study revealed a balanced distribution of gender, with a slightly higher representation of female patients (55.0%). This is

consistent with findings in preventive healthcare literature, where women are often more proactive in seeking medical care compared to men (Musich et al., 2016). The age distribution showed that most participants were in the 31–45 age group, which is a critical period for initiating preventive measures. However, the lower participation of older adults (>60 years) in the study suggests a potential gap in outreach efforts toward high-risk populations who may benefit the most from early detection strategies.

The utilization of preventive healthcare services demonstrated positive trends, with **80.0% of patients undergoing blood pressure screenings** and **75.0% undergoing blood glucose screenings**. This suggests that routine chronic disease screening is relatively well integrated into family medicine. However, **only 45.0% of patients had undergone cancer screenings**, which raises concerns regarding awareness and access to early detection programs. These findings align with previous research showing that while basic screenings are widely accepted, more specialized screenings often have lower uptake due to fear, misinformation, or accessibility issues (Flood et al., 2022).

One of the major findings of this study was the identification of barriers to preventive healthcare. A **lack of awareness (40.0%)** was the most frequently reported obstacle, which reinforces the need for enhanced patient education efforts by family physicians. Cost (30.0%) and lack of time (35.0%) were also significant barriers, indicating that financial and logistical constraints continue to hinder preventive care access. These findings are in line with studies that emphasize the importance of addressing social determinants of health in improving preventive healthcare utilization (Munger et al., 2018).

Physician involvement in preventive healthcare is a crucial factor in patient engagement, and the results of this study showed that **80.0% of family physicians routinely discuss preventive care** with their patients. Additionally, **70.0% provide health education sessions**, further demonstrating the active role of family physicians in promoting preventive healthcare. However, **60.0% of physicians reported time constraints** as a significant challenge, limiting their ability to fully integrate preventive measures into routine practice. Previous research supports these findings, indicating that high patient loads and administrative burdens often interfere with the implementation of preventive services (Crabtree et al., 2005).

The study also examined institutional support for preventive healthcare, revealing that **only 50.0% of physicians felt that their healthcare institutions provided adequate resources** for preventive services. This suggests that structural limitations, including workforce shortages and inadequate funding, may be hindering efforts to expand preventive care in family medicine settings. Addressing these institutional barriers is essential for improving long-term integration, as previous research has shown that well-supported primary care systems lead to better patient outcomes (Ohta & Sano, 2022).

Patient satisfaction with family medicine services was found to be high, with **82.5% of patients reporting satisfaction or high satisfaction** with the preventive care they received. This positive perception of family medicine underscores the importance of trust and continuity of care in preventive healthcare. Previous studies have shown that patients who regularly see a family physician are more likely to engage in preventive behaviors and adhere to medical advice (McIsaac et al., 2001). Despite this, a small proportion of patients (7.5%) reported dissatisfaction, which highlights the need for further investigation into specific areas where patient expectations are not being met.

One of the key takeaways from this research is that while patient engagement in preventive healthcare is generally strong, **specific areas such as cancer screening and vaccination coverage require improvement**. Increasing awareness campaigns and reinforcing physician-patient communication can help bridge these gaps. Studies suggest that targeted interventions, such as reminder systems and community-based outreach programs, have been effective in improving preventive care uptake (Fowler et al., 2020).

This study also reinforces the importance of reducing physician workload to improve preventive healthcare delivery. Strategies such as integrating **telehealth consultations** for preventive counseling and delegating certain tasks to **nurse practitioners or health educators** could help alleviate time constraints faced by family physicians. These approaches have been suggested as viable solutions in recent healthcare research, emphasizing the need for innovative solutions to enhance the delivery of preventive services (Kolber et al., 2023).

Conclusion

The findings of this study demonstrate that integrating family medicine into preventive healthcare has significant benefits for patient well-being. While screening rates for common conditions such as hypertension and diabetes are high, there are gaps in cancer screening and vaccination coverage that require targeted interventions. Barriers such as lack of awareness, financial constraints, and time limitations continue to hinder optimal preventive care utilization. Family physicians play a vital role in preventive healthcare, but their ability to deliver services effectively is often constrained by institutional limitations and heavy workloads. Strengthening institutional support, increasing patient awareness, and implementing innovative

strategies to ease physician burden can further enhance the role of family medicine in preventive care. By addressing these challenges, healthcare systems can move toward a more proactive and patient-centered model that prioritizes prevention and long-term well-being.

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