General practitioners in Styria - what research ideas do they have and how do they rate the ideas of others? Medical University of Graz, Austria

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**Background:** The Institute of General Practice and Evidence-based Health Services Research (IAMEV) surveyed all 1015 Styrian general practitioners (GPs), and asked them what motivated them to participate in research projects, and to formulate their own research questions.

**Study Question:** What research ideas do GPs have? Which of them could be used as a basis for specific research questions? How do Styrian GPs evaluate research questions suggested by their colleagues in terms of relevance to their own practice?

**Methodology:** The GPs’ 133 research ideas were divided into two categories – “general research topics” (105) and “research questions” (28). An expert panel reviewed research questions in terms of their feasibility and relevance. In order to structure them according to the PICO-scheme, 17 were selected and reformulated based on semi-structured telephone interviews with the GPs that suggested them. The expert panel prioritized the items in the question pool according to relevance and feasibility, and selected 10 research questions. All 1015 Styrian GPs were sent the questions and asked to evaluate them in terms of relevance to their own practice (rating scale: 1-4).

**Results:** The response rate to the 1015 questionnaires was 14.7% (n=149). The GPs rated the question on the gatekeeping system as most relevant to their practice. Other research questions they considered relevant mostly concerned diseases commonly encountered by GPs.

**Discussion:** While several studies exist on what motivates GPs to participate in healthcare research projects, few attempt to determine the relevance of specific research questions to GPs. Involving GPs in determining the content of these projects may encourage them to participate in them.