Australian patients’ attitudes toward chaperone use for intimate physical examinations in general practice

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Abstract
The aim of the project was to investigate how Australian patients feel about the use of chaperones for intimate examinations in general practice.

Keywords
chaperone, intimate, physical, examinations, general, practice, australian, patients’, attitudes, toward

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If you have any further queries with regards to this project please contact Ms Alyssa Horgan at Graduate Medicine, University of Wollongong on (02) 4221 5819.

The full study can be found at: www.racgp.org.au/afp/2017/november/patients-attitudes-towards-chaperone-use/

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**RESULTS**

Data was collected from 331 male and 356 female adult patients who were attending one of 13 general practices in NSW.

For Pap smears, 62.7% of women preferred to see a female GP. For genital problems, 52% of men preferred a male GP.

Overall, only a minority of respondents preferred to have a chaperone present. The proportion of patients preferring a chaperone for an intimate examination with their regular GP was 23-33%. When an intimate examination was not performed by the patients usual GP, 5-20% of respondents preferred a chaperone.

Both male and female patients were significantly less likely to want a chaperone with a doctor they did not know well in comparison to their regular GP.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

These findings support the Medical Board of Australia and the RACGP which encourages individualised discussions with patients on whether a chaperone should be offered.