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Some 450 million patient visits to primary care clinics occur in the United States each year. And as the [shortage of doctors](https://news.aamc.org/medical-)

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McDonald, MM, PhD, executive director of the Center for Health Policy and Center for Primary Care and Outcomes Research. “They worry about whether their concerns and needs will be addressed adequately. Getting the right diagnosis, treatment and support are all important to patients, so any risk of experiencing suboptimal care due to time stressors is worth understanding better.”

In [a study](https://journals.lww.com/lww-medicalcare/Abstract/publishahead/Organizational_Influences_on_Time_Pressure.98559.aspx) ([https://journals.lww.com/lww-medicalcare/Abstract/publishahead/Organizational Influences on Time Pressure.98559.aspx](https://journals.lww.com/lww-medicalcare/Abstract/publishahead/Organizational_Influences_on_Time_Pressure.98559.aspx)),

published in the American Public Health Association journal, *Medical Care*, McDonald and her colleagues wrote that despite concern about the impact time pressure has on the delivery of health care, “scant evidence exists about types of time stress, the organizational factors that shape such stressors in routine care settings, and consequences for patients and practitioners alike.”

So the researchers analyzed cross-sectional survey data collected from January to August 2016 from primary care teams at 16 randomly selected primary care practices associated with two large Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs) and their patients with cardiovascular disease, diabetes, or both. Through April 2016, they gathered data from 353 physicians and staff members of the clinics.

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pressure. A different organizational influence — leaders that are responsive to the clinic teams — was associated with reductions in practice-level time pressure.

The potential consequences for patients are missed opportunities in patient care and inadequate chronic care support — two very important factors behind successful health care.

“The findings underscore the importance of linking all levels and aspects of physician practice organizations to mitigate the negative effects of time pressure on patient care” said **Stephen Shortell** (<http://sph.berkeley.edu/stephen-shortell>), principal investigator of the **Patient Centered Outcomes Research Institute** (<https://www.pcori.org/>) (PCORI) grant that funded the study. Their other co-author is **Hector Rodriguez** (<http://sph.berkeley.edu/hector-rodriguez>) at the UC Berkeley School of Public Health.

They discovered that one-third of medical team respondents indicated they work in a chaotic practice atmosphere, juggling patient calls, documentation, quality reporting, and many other tasks. The more senior the staff member was, reports of working in a chaotic environment lessened.

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