

0311.De Alwis Karunaratne,L

Study of the effect of a structured referral letter on continuity of care in eight Family Practices in Sri Lanka.

MD (Family Medicine) - 1992

D 113

This study was designed to find out whether the use of a standardized structured referral letter would improve communications in referral. The study was conducted in a sample of eight family practices located in and around Colombo within a radius of 15 km. These practices were purposively selected and randomly allocated into a control group A and an intervention group B. The rate of return of patients after referral was below 50 percent in all the practices, and the rate of reply from consultants was even lower. Replies that were received from consultants contained useful information. A significantly better rate of reply was obtained from referrals made to the private sector than to the public sector. There was no significant difference in reply rates from the specialties. When the structured referral letter was used inclusion of essential patient information improved, but it had no significant effect on the rate of reply from consultants.