




Collaboration with other professionals to provide patient care

Canada's health care system has been described as a system comprising vertical silos, leading to a lack of system level coordination.¹ This is attributed to the lack of mechanisms to facilitate the sharing of resources and information.¹ This type of infrastructure leads to decreased patient and FP satisfaction—evidence suggests that fragmented care has a negative effect on patient care.¹ As such, there have been calls for more collaborative relationships between providers to bridge health care delivery from one silo to another.^{1,2}

Results from the 2007 National Physician Survey (NPS) show the various ways FPs collaborate with other professionals (note that the term *other professionals* was not defined in the questionnaire): 90.1% of FPs consult with other professionals by telephone to provide patient care; 20.1% discuss patient or clinical issues electronically; and 56% meet together to review patients or clinical problems. Also, 83.1% of FPs share patient care decisions with other professionals; 74.1% discuss new evidence and its applicability to patients; and 63.2% review adverse events or critical incidents together. A little more than 90% of FPs believe this type of working relationship with other professionals improves both the care their patients receive and that which they deliver (Figure 1).

The data show that FPs are engaged in collaboration; however, there is room for improvement in some

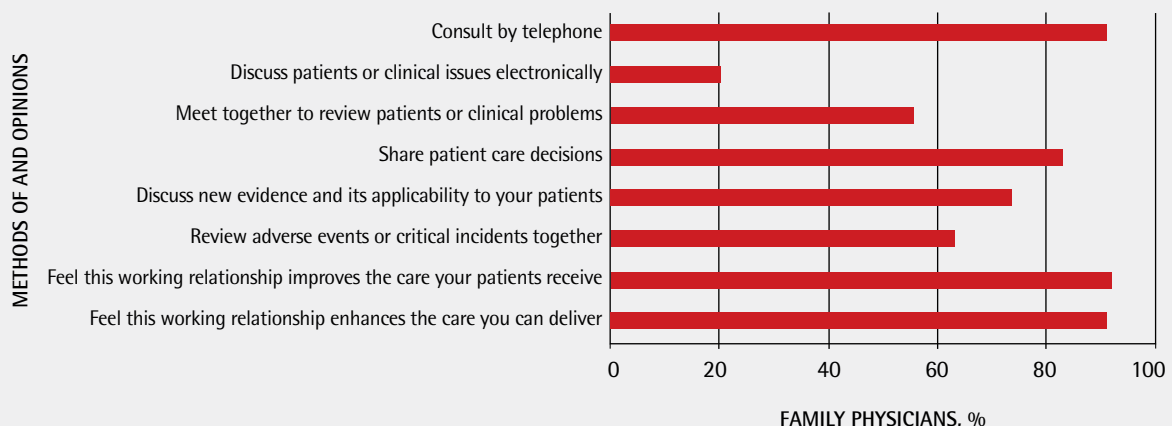
areas. Collaborative and interdisciplinary models of care delivery are being implemented in several Canadian provinces.^{3,4} This is the result of an improved fiscal climate, increased federal transfers, recommendations from the Romanow Commission and Kirby Committee, and growing concerns among politicians and the public about health care access and quality.³

The NPS is a collaborative project of the College of Family Physicians of Canada, the Canadian Medical Association, and the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada. Additional results are available at www.nationalphysiciansurvey.ca. If you would like the opportunity to develop and write a future Fast Fact using the NPS results, please contact **Harleen Sahota**, National Physician Survey Project Manager, at 800 387-6197, extension 416, or hs@cfpc.ca. 

References

1. Masotti P, Rivoire E, Rowe W, Dahl M, Plain E. Collaborative partnerships: managing increased healthcare demand without increasing overall system capacity. *Healthc Q* 2006;9(2):72-6.
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3. Hutchison B. A long time coming: primary healthcare renewal in Canada. *Healthc Pap* 2008;8(2):10-24.
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Figure 1. Percentage of FPs who collaborate with other professionals to provide patient care, by methods of and opinions about collaboration*



*Only those respondents who completed the long questionnaire were asked about collaboration with other professionals to provide patient care. The responding sample (n=3761) has been weighted to represent the population (N=28 739).