



Same-day care for patients with urgent problems

The 2007 National Physician Survey (NPS) asked family doctors how long a patient would typically wait until the first available appointment with them or their practice if that patient contacted the office or was urgently referred. Responses indicated that 65% of physicians would be able to offer those patients a same-day appointment (Figure 1). By contrast, a 2007 Commonwealth Fund survey found that only 22% of Canadian adults could get an appointment the same day if they were sick or needed care.¹ It is important to note that the Commonwealth Fund surveyed the public while the NPS surveyed doctors. In addition, both surveys captured perceptions rather than audited accounts.

The NPS results showed the following:

- A greater percentage of male physicians than female physicians indicated that they were able to see a patient with an urgent problem on the same day (67% vs 62%,

$P=.0045$), and physicians aged 55 to 64 most often indicated being able to see a patient with an urgent problem on the same day ($P<.0001$) (Figure 2).

- A greater percentage of solo practitioners indicated being able to see patients with urgent problems on the same day compared with family doctors in group practices or interprofessional practices (71%, 69%, and 55%, respectively, $P=.002$ between solo and group practitioners).
- Physicians who work primarily in private offices are just as likely as those who work primarily in walk-in clinics to be able to see a patient with an urgent problem on the same day (77% vs 75%, respectively).
- Family doctors serving rural patient populations most often indicated that they could see a patient with an urgent problem on the same day ($P<.0001$) (Figure 3).

Results are based on the 2007 NPS, a unique 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 **Sarah Scott**, National Physician Survey and Janus Project Coordinator, at 800 387-6197, extension 289, or sksc@cfpc.ca.

Reference

1. Schoen C, Osborn R, Doty MM, Bishop M, Peugh J, Murukutla N. Toward higher-performance health systems: adults' health care experiences in seven countries, 2007. *Health Aff (Millwood)* 2007;26(6):w717-34.

Figure 1. Family physicians' responses when asked how quickly they could see a patient requesting an urgent appointment

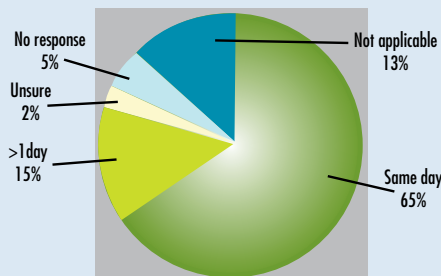


Figure 2. Family physicians able to provide same-day care for patients requesting urgent appointments

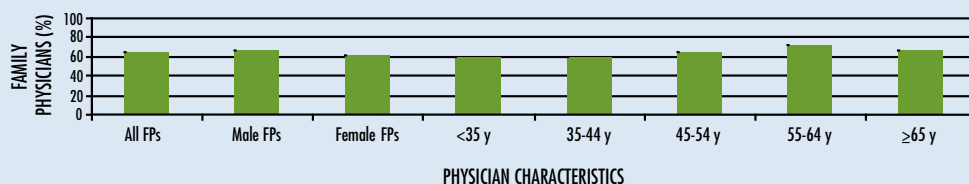


Figure 3. Family physicians able to provide same-day care for patients requesting urgent appointments by the patient population that they serve

