More specialists needed to meet needs of aging population

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(HealthDay)—More specialist providers, including vascular surgeons and cardiologists, are needed to meet the care needs of a growing elderly population, according to research published in the November issue of *Health Affairs*.

Timothy M. Dall, from IHS Inc., in Washington, D.C., and colleagues projected the future prevalence of selected diseases and health risk factors to model future demand for health care services.

The researchers found that, based on both changing demographic characteristics as well as expanded medical coverage under the Affordable Care Act, the projected demand for adult primary care services will grow by approximately 14 percent from 2013 to 2025. The highest projected demand growth is for vascular surgery (31 percent), followed by cardiology (20 percent) and neurological surgery, radiology,

and general surgery (each at 18 percent). The current supply of many specialists throughout the United States is inadequate to meet the current demand, based on market indicators such as long wait times to obtain appointments.

"Failure to train sufficient numbers and the correct mix of specialists could exacerbate already long wait times for appointments, reduce access to care for some of the nation's most vulnerable patients, and reduce patients' quality of life," the authors write.

More information: Abstract
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