

Study finds that the majority of older people are admitted to hospital appropriately

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Researchers at the University of Birmingham have found that the majority of over 65s admitted to hospital felt that it was the right choice for their health, while all GPs and hospital doctors who took part in the study said they felt there had been no inappropriate admissions.

Of the 104 patients interviewed in three locations across the country, just under 9-percent felt that [hospital](#) was not the right place for them.

The findings challenge current perceptions of large numbers of [older people](#) being inappropriately admitted into hospital.

Professor Jon Glasby, from the University of Birmingham explained, 'There is an apparent perception that [large numbers](#) of older people are admitted to hospital when they don't really need the services provided there. We found that this wasn't the case with the older people in our study. A key difference with our research is that we engaged directly with older people who had personal experience of emergency hospital admissions, as well as with local practitioners. This gave us a much more rounded, and accurate, perspective.'

The study, funded by the NIHR Research for Patient Benefit Programme, found that some older people delayed seeking help or went to significant lengths to avoid hospital unless it was absolutely necessary, which the researchers found could present a risk to the patient's health.

Professor Glasby added, 'There is an urgent need to halt the current tide

of negative perception towards older people and hospital admissions. There is a danger with this perception that people who need to go to hospital don't go, or delay going in, and that adds a significant risk factor. Our health services, and indeed our headline writers, need to take note of this study.'

No previous studies undertaken in the UK or internationally have engaged older people as a part of collecting data on admissions, despite recognition that older service users have the experience and expertise to help make improvements for the future.

Professor Glasby said: 'Given the importance of user involvement and co-production in other areas of health and [social care](#), this is a shocking finding.

'Although health and social care practitioners bring professional and technical expertise, it is only older people and their families who have experience of declining health, trying to seek help, exploring alternatives and the crisis that leads to admission. No one else, how well trained or qualified, can possibly have this same overview and expertise, which makes older people's input absolutely essential.'

The Birmingham researchers have [produced a set of recommendations \('ten top tips'\)](#) from the study (based on insights from older people themselves), which will be sent to all hospital Trusts in England. These seek to help improve services for older people and influence current policy, and are jointly badged with a series of national [health](#) and social care bodies (Age UK, the Social Care Institute for Excellence, the NHS Confederation and the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services).

Provided by University of Birmingham

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