

# PCPs spend average of 18 minutes with each patient

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Primary care physicians spend an average of 18.0 minutes with their

patients, according to a study published in the January issue of *Medical Care*.

Hannah T. Neprash, Ph.D., from the School of Public Health at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, and colleagues used electronic health record (EHR) data from primary care practices captured by a large health information technology company to calculate [exam](#) length recorded with timestamps in the EHR and schedule deviations based on the EHR's practice management functionality.

The researchers found that the average primary care exam was 18.0 minutes long (standard deviation, 13.5 minutes). Exams, on average, ran 1.2 minutes later than their scheduled duration ([standard deviation](#), 13.5 minutes). More than two-thirds of visits deviated from the schedule by five minutes or more. Compared with visits scheduled for 20 or 30 minutes, visits scheduled for 10 or 15 minutes were more likely to exceed their allotted time.

"Primary care offices' overuse of brief appointment slots may lead to appointment overrun, increasing wait time for patients and overburdening providers," the authors write. "Longer appointments are critical for clinically complex patients, but misallocation of these extended visits represents potentially inefficient use of clinical capacity."

**More information:** [Abstract/Full Text](#)

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