

Opinion: Psychiatrists should routinely write to patients after appointments

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Psychiatrists should routinely write to their patients about their care following appointments, according to a new opinion piece published on Dec. 4. Writing in the [*BMJ*](#), Dr. Katharine Weetman from the University

of Birmingham and Dr. Dave Martin from the University of Bristol and Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust make the case for regular correspondence between mental health clinicians and their patients, in the same way that other branches of medicine do.

Dr. Weetman and Dr. Martin argue that specific considerations are needed when communicating with [patients](#) who are being supported by a psychiatrist and promote the benefits of clear communication.

Dr. Katharine Weetman, Assistant Professor in Clinical Communication, University of Birmingham and co-author of the piece said, "Rather than feeling like patients might worsen after receiving written communication from their psychiatrist, we've seen how it can be a positive experience that patients welcome. We can see in other research that patients want copies of letters written about them and that [transparency](#) in clinical [communication](#) can help patients to feel more involved in their care."

Dr. Dave Martin from the Center for Academic Mental Health at the University of Bristol and Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust, said, "We've seen patients using their letters as a tool for hope and finding that written views of a clinician can give a greater perspective when during distressing experiences such as psychosis. In the view of the authors, as long as letters are carefully considered there should be no downside to treating patients with the dignity of writing to them directly."

More information: Dave Martin et al, Writing letters to patients attending psychiatry clinics, *BMJ* (2023). [DOI: 10.1136/bmj.p2857](https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.p2857)

Provided by University of Birmingham

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