

Summary

Delayed discharge is when a patient remains as a hospital inpatient after having been assessed as medically fit to be discharged. NHS trusts have identified delayed discharge as an important problem due to the costs to and impact on healthcare providers, staff and patients. An understanding of these impacts and costs resulting from delayed discharge is needed to help managers and policymakers make informed decisions when addressing the problems and consequences of delayed discharge.

Following a scoping review, the Research Partnership Team conducted a systematic review of the impact and experience of delayed discharge, looking at the perspectives of healthcare systems, healthcare staff and patients. The team used six publication databases to look at studies conducted in OECD countries since 2000, and included both qualitative and quantitative studies on delayed discharge.

The team judged that the methodology used in many of the studies was of low quality, and are therefore cautious in identifying the implications for policy. Based on their findings, however, they recommend that a broader, holistic approach is needed when addressing delayed discharge as this extended hospital stay has both direct and indirect effects on patients, staff, and hospitals.

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Start date and duration: February 2015, 2 years

Partners and collaborators involved: University College London, University College London Hospitals