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Letters

Call for shake up in NHS funding: Few GPs among the 900 Doctors for Reform

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EDITOR—Of the 900 doctors who signed up to support an insurance based funding for a national health service, only three are general practitioners and no one claims to be working in the discipline of public health.¹

It can be no coincidence that the majority of those who support this reform are hospital specialists—those who are most likely to benefit from an insurance-based system, in which users of health care can access whatever specialist they think they need, and however many, until they get an opinion or treatment they want. This leads to a consumerist and demand driven health care (more cosmetic procedures), not one that is based on need (health promotion and public health interventions, for example).

Insurance based systems favour supplier-induced demand, as well as high-cost curative procedures with little impact on long term health outcome and even less in terms of public health.

Let's not forget that in the United Kingdom general practitioners have an important gatekeeper function that helps to drive down the cost of health care.

Footnotes

- Competing interests RM is an NHS general practitioner.

References

1. Eaton L. Reform group calls for shake up in NHS funding. *BMJ* 2006;**332**: 813. (8 April.)