



## **THE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION OF MALTA**

The Professional Centre, Sliema Road, Gzira, Malta

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**"Empowering Primary Health Care"**

**Parliamentary Standing Committee on Health**

**March 2015**



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- MAM represents all doctors in Malta
- This includes Private GPs of which there are about 250 and Health Centre GPs and GP Trainees of which there are about 100



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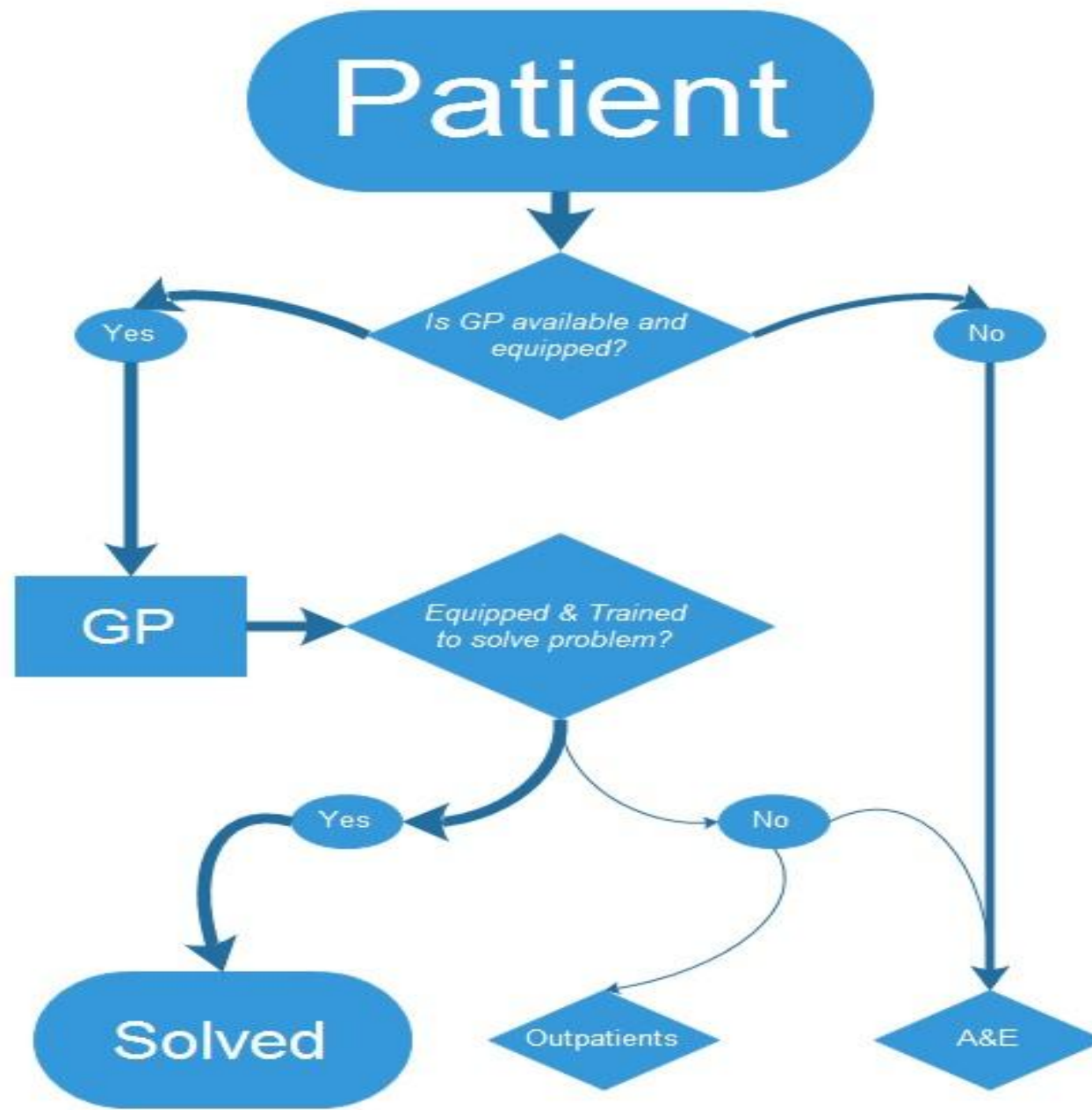
- Becoming a GP takes 2 years of foundation doctor training and 3 years of specialised training.
- Since 2007 when the training started 40 GPs have graduated, about 20 GPs are currently in training and about 35% are no longer in full time government service
- It is illegal to call yourself a General Practitioner or Family Doctor without necessary qualifications



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- Primary Health Care is a mix of private and public GPs.
- In 2013 there were 785,000 doctor-patient encounters in Health Centres, peripheral clinics and patients homes.
- These 785,000 encounters resulted in only a few thousand referrals to A+E.
- Less than 5 referrals a month are considered inappropriate by the Inappropriate Referrals Monitoring Committee (no longer active)
- 32% of complaints (n=27) were about prolonged waiting time





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Much progress since 2008

- ✓ Training programme
- ✓ Increase in doctors and trainees
- ✓ Extended opening hours
- ✓ Sessional contract and exclusivity
- ✓ Schedule V for Hypertension (High blood pressure)



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## Main problems - Private

- Lack of access by private GPs to results of patients blood tests and X-rays.
- Private GP must refer to Health Centre colleague or hospital for free medicines
- Threat of increased government involvement in the private market



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### Main problems – Health Centre

- Patients are not able to see the same doctor or even know if the doctor who they are waiting to see is a GP with 20 years experience or a foundation doctor
- With limited exceptions patients are not able to make appointments for non-urgent encounters with the same doctor
- Patients are not told their approximate waiting time resulting in unrealistic expectations





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## Solutions - Private

- Extend IT systems covering X-rays and blood tests to private GPs
- Extend prescribing rights (Schedule V) to private GPs
- Offer training to private GPs in specific areas to take workload off outpatients
- Increase radiological access to the GP to avoid having to refer for simple tests (like ultrasounds)
- Copy of discharge letter posted to private GP



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## Solutions Health Centre

- Let patients know which doctor will see them from before and how long the waiting time is
- Allow patients to make appointments with the same team of doctors
- Increase training opportunities for GPs so they can see more chronic disease follow-ups with support from Mater Dei
- Increase radiological access to the GP to avoid having to refer for simple tests (like ultrasounds)
- Increase access to free medicines for diseases which GPs can manage on their own



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Thank you