

the 1990s, the number of people in the UK who are aged 65 and over has increased by 1.5 million (1990–2000) and is projected to increase by a further 1.5 million by 2020 (Office for National Statistics 2001).

There is a growing awareness of the need to address the health care needs of the ageing population. The Department of Health (2000) has set out a vision for the future of health care for older people, and the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) (2001) has produced guidance on the management of common conditions in older people. The Department of Health (2000) also states that the health care system should be able to meet the needs of older people in a way that is cost-effective, efficient, and of high quality. This paper reports on a study that was conducted in order to explore the health care needs of older people in the UK, and to identify the factors that influence these needs. The study was conducted in a general practice in the south of England, and involved a series of interviews with general practitioners, nurses, and older people themselves. The findings of the study are discussed in the context of the current health care system, and the implications for practice are considered.

The study was conducted in a general practice in the south of England, which had a population of approximately 10,000. The practice had a long history, and was one of the largest in the area. It had a number of general practitioners, and a team of nurses, health care assistants, and other staff. The practice was part of a larger health care system, and was subject to a range of regulations and standards. The study was conducted over a period of 12 months, and involved a series of interviews with general practitioners, nurses, and older people themselves.

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