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# Deakin research aims to improve patient safety

A NEW Deakin University research project in south-west Victoria aims to use patient feedback to improve the safety of medical clinics.

Deakin Rural Health researcher, Andrea Hernan, is leading the 18-month study which will collect data from patients at six regional GP clinics.

The primary care patient measure of safety survey was created by Dr Hernan as part of her PhD studies.

The patient feedback tool involves 25 questions covering access to care, communication, external policy environment, information flow, organisation and care planning, physical environment, patient-weighted factors, referral systems and task performance of the clinicians.

“We’re looking at the feasibility of using patient feedback to improve safety in general practice,” Ms Hernan said.

Patients from the participating practices will

complete the survey which will be analysed by Deakin Rural Health.

Practices will receive a summary report of the results and will be encouraged to undertake a six-month intervention based on the patient feedback.

Patients will again complete the survey after the intervention period to see if improvements have been made.

“We’re focused on how the practices respond to patient feedback on safety and how they use that feedback to improve practice,” Ms Hernan said.

If successful the intervention could be expanded to other regions across Australia.

Ms Hernan said data collection had started and practices are being offered support to develop safety improvement teams, models for improvement, and to implement safety interventions.

The research is funded by a grant of \$87,348 from Western Alliance.