The authors suggested that "Redistributing proposed funding for inpatient subacute beds to measures for overcoming these barriers" may improve patient flow through the whole hospital system. This idea fits well with current federal health policy that "bed equivalents" are an important aspect of innovative and flexible models of care for rehabilitation services in Australia.[2] Most states are reviewing how rehabilitation services are best designed to ensure the most effective use of limited resources, both in terms of programs and workforce.

Improving the coordination of programs managed by the various levels of government, across health, disability and the aged care sectors, will help overcome the barriers identified in this study. The Australasian Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine applauds efforts to increase research on rehabilitation and patient care, and supports federal and state initiatives providing increased resources for subacute care, both within hospitals and in the community. Investment in rehabilitation services at the community level is one of the most viable solutions and will meet the needs of an ageing population. Effective community care and the proposed National Disability Insurance Scheme (http://www.ndis.gov.au), if well executed, will reduce the burden on other parts of the health and aged care sectors and help ease the burden on hospitals.

Kathleen McCarthy President

Australasian Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine, Royal Australian College of Physicians, Sydney, NSW.
afrm@racp.edu.au

Competing interests: No relevant disclosures.

doi: 10.5694/mja12.10178

1 New PW, Cameron PA, Olver JH, Stoelwinder JU. Inpatient subacute care in Australia: perceptions of admission and discharge barriers. *Med J Aust* 2011; 195: 538-541.
2 Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing. A healthier future for all Australians: National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission — final report. Canberra: DoHA, June 2009. http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/nhhrc-report (accessed Mar 2012). ❑

Inpatient subacute care in Australia: perceptions of admission and discharge barriers

To the Editor: The recent article by New and colleagues[1] is an important piece in the "bed-block" picture, providing insight into perceived difficulties for patients on discharge, as a result of insufficient appropriate facilities.