ABSTRACT

Background: GP sick note certification practices have been questioned recently in the report, “Working for a healthier tomorrow” and in the media. The government have responded with a plan to overhaul the sick note certification system. The literature concerning the knowledge and attitudes of GPs is sparse and adding to this would inform change.

Objective: To assess the knowledge and attitudes of GPs with respect to fitness for work assessments.

Methods: The study involved a cross-sectional survey sent via email by Newcastle PCT to practice managers to forward to 178 local GP principals.

Results: There was a response rate of 11.2%. Most GPs had undergone training to write sick notes but not in assessment of fitness for work or related areas. Most GPs were aware of guidance in the area and demonstrated this in answer to vignettes.

Conclusions: The low response rate means that the results from this survey must be viewed with caution. Suggestions made for a higher response rate and other research are given for those considering undertaking a study in this area.