

## **Health Economics in Primary Care**

*Catia Nicodemo, University of Oxford*

The health system is extremely complex, and this gives rise to concerns about how the health system should be organised, how incentives should be designed, and how performance should be evaluated. Health-care markets lack the characteristics needed to determine a "market" price that reflects the economic value of resources used. An understanding of the social conditions that affect resource allocation is at the heart of economic thinking. With the increasing emphasis on providing efficient and equitable services from primary care and against a background of increasing demands on limited resources, economic theory can facilitate both the direction of primary care and the decisions that are made within it, but primary care research has so far received little attention in health economics. Specific areas of primary care where research in health economics is needed are:

- The determinants of the demand and supply of health care and agent's behaviours
- Current policy reforms
- Inequalities in health and access to care
- Workload in primary care
- Evaluating outcomes: are some doctors better than others?
- The economics of integrated care
- Is it worth paying for better performance?
- Paying for complex care