

CONCEPT
EXPLAINER

WHAT IS

Missingness

swipe



01

Missingness is

a term recently used in health and social care. It is more than just missing a few appointments: it describes the recurring pattern of not taking up offers of care or support, often across different services, which over time can have a negative impact on individuals and their health and wellbeing.

This pattern and its cumulative impact may not be detected by those offering support.



02

Missing two or more

appointments in primary care has been linked to a tripling of risk of premature death for individuals with a physical health condition, and an eight-fold increase for those with a mental health condition, even when adjusting for multiple patient and practice factors.



03

Barriers to

accessing or engaging with care are likely to be complex, significant and enduring for those experiencing missingness. Many of these are connected to poverty, existing health needs, stigma and the wider social determinants of health.



04

Applying a missingness 'lens'

shifts the blame from individuals and instead considers what aspects of the health and social care system create barriers for people to access. This could include identifying who is missing, understanding their experiences and barriers to engagement, and offering approaches tailored to their needs.



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Thanks for reading

react and share

