

Of care and caregivers patient assessment

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Patient's assessment of care and healthcare professionals: subjective but reliable data

Patient-Reported Outcome Measures (PROM) questionnaires enable patients to evaluate the care they received as well as the health professionals that cared for them. Although measuring patient experience and satisfaction is highly subjective, these data remain reliable. Experience has shown that patient data often overlap significantly with other medical indicators on the same issues.

If appropriately done, patient assessments offer numerous benefits. They are facilitated by information technologies but their scaling up is often hindered by several obstacles.

Improving quality of care and patient engagement: the numerous benefits of patients' assessments

The evaluation of care and health professionals by patients, contributes to the improvement of the quality of care. Specifically, this assessment contributes to:

- **Improving quality of care.** The evaluations are used by doctors as a tool for continuous improvement of individual practices (e.g., comparison of results between doctors on the same pathologies). They also contribute to the improvement of the health care system as a whole by highlighting possible dysfunctions and problems.
- **Improving patients' satisfaction.** Beyond the quality of care, evaluations allow for the improvement of patients' perception: their expectations are clearly identified, and professional practices are thus developed to meet them.
- **Tracking progress.** If the evaluation is regular, it can be used to track progress, and trace and understand the patient's evolution throughout his/her journey in the hospital setting.
- **Creating a link between doctors and patients.** Thanks to regular assessment, the patient feels better cared for. These assessments enable regular and bilateral communication between the patient and his/her doctor.
- **Empowering the patient as regards his/her health and improving treatment compliance.** A study has shown an increase in compliance among those patients most involved in their therapy
- **Creating emulation.** Both the patient and the doctor are motivated by the prospect of the evaluation and would improve their performance.
- **Identifying weak signals from patients to react quickly,** if needed, to prevent worsening of the situation.
- **Developing a more personalised medicine.** For instance, information obtained prior to the surgery can enable the doctor to adapt his/her intervention as closely as possible to the patient's needs and expectations.

The conditions for successful patients' assessments

Some elements influence the relevance of results deriving from patients' assessments and the success of this process. Good practices in this area indicate to:

- **Monitor patient data regularly** to obtain the most accurate evaluation throughout the patient's journey in hospital setting.
- **Enable patients to fill in their evaluation at home** to prevent undue influence, even indirectly, from the doctor.

- **Train professionals** to take into consideration the increasing expectations of patients. For instance, beyond the rigour of a protocol in a clinical development, the objective is to work with the patient to design the clinical trial, the existing barriers, etc.
- **Let patients have a say.** Assessments can be done through questionnaires, but the opinions of patients may also be collected orally by involving them into Ethics Committees discussions or through an internet forum.
- **Ensure that doctors take ownership of the evaluation** and communicate with patients. This should increase the response rates to evaluations.
- **Share openly the results of the evaluation.**

Digital technologies accelerate and facilitate evaluations of cares and carers by patients

Innovative information and communication technologies facilitate patients' assessment of care, and professionals: communication channels are numerous and enable patients to express themselves or to be informed. Data collection and analysis are also easier. While digital technologies enable major advances in terms of patients' assessment, careful attention should be paid when, for instance, assessment is being done as a google reviews. These google reviews sometimes distort the doctor-patient relationship since patients arrive at the medical centre with preconceived ideas of their doctor. They can then take these into consideration to accept, or not, the care that is being recommended.

Some obstacles still limit the deployment and usability of assessments

Despite a significant increase in the number of patient's assessments over the last few years, there are still limitations as to their deployment and usability:

- **Patient feedback questionnaires from exist but are under-used.** Despite the existence of performant measurement tools, few professionals use them. This, for example, is the case of the feedback questionnaire E-satis.
- **A lack of data interoperability.** In France, there is no standard tool for the evaluation of care and health professionals. Outcomes of assessments are therefore collected by each professional independently and sharing this information is often very complex as data are not interoperable.