

Patient Centered Medicine – The Promise of Quality Care

Written by [medmonthly](#) on February 1, 2017 in [Features](#)

The rise in chronic disease among populations and the rising cost of health care are driving forces behind the growing trend of patient-centered care in the U.S. It is not just the healthcare fraternity, but also a new breed of an empowered patient base and their families that are realizing the huge benefits of taking an active part in the healthcare process.

Under patient centered medicine, each patient is treated as a unique individual and as such is provided with customized healthcare options based on their needs. The value of this new healthcare trend is now being recognized and embraced by leading healthcare organizations such as the American Academy of Family Physicians among others.

The Growing Importance of Implementing a Comprehensive Patient Centered Care Approach

Miscommunication and rushed interactions between healthcare providers and the patient is one of the ills of the modern healthcare system. Healthcare quality delivery not only takes a hit, but more importantly it has led to a trust deficit between both the patient and the healthcare provider. Lack of education and awareness on the part of the patient limits participation in improving their own health. Even now, a significant majority of patients leave a doctor's office without fully understanding their condition, the treatment options, as well as the approach suggested by the provider. This lack of communication can be hugely counter-productive to patient healthcare.

Under patient centered medicine the big area of focus is on equal participation and the forging of an open channel of communication between a patient and their healthcare provider. The patient has an equal opportunity to voice his concerns, seek better and more detailed information about their health condition. Patients with terminal illness also have the option to exercise their right to withdraw treatment if at any stage they feel that their treatment is not being addressed in a manner that aligns with their dignity and/or outweighs health benefits.

A personal and continuing relationship between the patient and the physician is also encouraged as a way of ensuring continuity so patients don't wait till they face acute or an immediate healthcare risk before seeking medical help.

Another encouraging aspect of the patient-centered medicine approach is that it is considered to be an effective option for ensuring patients with chronic diseases have better control over their conditions. The rise in chronic conditions among adults across the U.S. is a worrisome factor because of the economics of rise in healthcare costs and impact on the economy. And although many chronic diseases are preventable, most patients either chose to ignore the importance of preventive medicine or are completely unaware of how they can take better control of their health.

However, with continuous care, a team based approach to patient health, and active patient participation, the dangers of chronic conditions can be effectively dealt with and in most cases avoided.

Benefits of Patient-Centered Medicine

- The focus in patient centered care is on forging a proactive partnership between the patient and healthcare teams.
- Improved and open communication is encouraged between the patients and the physician.
- An active effort is made to understand not just the patient's healthcare needs, but also to understand where they are coming from and to respect their decision making choices in improving their healthcare management.
- Medical decisions are based on and customized in keeping with the patient's unique healthcare needs.
- Educating the patient and their families is a core aspect of patient centered medicine; every effort is made to keep the patient and their families completely aware of their health condition and their medication and treatment options at every stage.
- Each of the above mentioned steps help in building a strong trust component which is now being recognized as a critical aspect of delivering quality care to patients.

PREVENTIVE MEDICINE

Improving Patient Satisfaction and Clinical Outcomes



INTRODUCTION

Patient Centered Medicine

focuses on the health and wellness of each patient. The patient is recognized as a unique individual with specific and unique healthcare needs.

Patient centered medicine aims to improve patient satisfaction and clinical outcomes, while also reducing cost of care.

PREVENTIVE MEDICINE FOCUSES ON QUALITY HEALTHCARE FOR PATIENTS IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS;

Comprehensive care

is delivered via a team of care providers who consider the physical, mental, acute, chronic, and preventive care needs of the patient.

Accessible care

helps in ensuring patients can quickly access healthcare services using multiple communication channels including email, video chat, mobile apps, and after-hours phone calls.

Quality care

is ensured for patients as the patient and the families are informed about the health condition of the patient at each stage and the patient is encouraged to take informed decisions about his/her health.



A PATIENT-CENTERED CARE PLAN OFFERS:



Personalized care to Patients

To help patients design and address their health issues and concerns.



Review of Medication Plan

To help patients better understand and track their medication regime.



Education and Guidance

To help patients become more proactive about following and meeting their health goals.

HEALTHCARE TECHNOLOGY IN PATIENT CENTERED CARE

Important ways in which healthcare technology is changing the patient care landscape;

- Technology like EHRs (Electronic Health Records) and patient management tools enable patient care team members quick and easily access patient healthcare information so they have a better understanding of what the patient needs.
- Healthcare technologies make use of a number of tools that help patient care teams to keep a track of illnesses, or to run reports, and effectively enhance care delivery across the healthcare organization.
- Faster and easy access to important patient information is not only crucial to a patient's health, but timely access can also help in the prevention of avoidable illnesses and avoidable healthcare costs over time.
- Wearable technology and healthcare apps can help patients keep a track of their health.
- Wide spread use of remote patient monitoring systems will help patient care teams to monitor and collect medical and health data from patients enrolled in monitoring program leading to better health management.



Information Technology Can Boost Patient Centered Medicine

The prime focus of healthcare technologies is to enable patient care teams to keep a track of illnesses, to run important reports, and to effectively enhance care delivery across the healthcare organization. Increasingly information technology is proving to be a breakthrough aspect of ensuring success of patient centered medicine approach. Mobile devices in particular are proving to be highly effective means of ensuring patients have better control over their health. Using technology tools such as email, video chat, and mobile apps, patients can benefit from better access to healthcare services.

Better use of remote patient monitoring systems on the other hand can help patient care teams continually monitor and collect medical and health data from patients enrolled in monitoring programs which again can lead to better health management. Understanding patient needs is integral to the patient centered medicine approach and the use of technology such as EHRs (Electronic Health Records) and patient management tools make it easy for patient care team members to quickly and easily access patient healthcare information so they have a better understanding of what the patient needs.

Conclusion

Quality healthcare and delivery is steadily gaining prominence not only across the U.S., but also across the globe. There is a real and very immediate need for adopting a healthcare model that is open, quickly accessible, interactive, and focuses fairly and squarely on improving overall patient well-being. Patient centered medicine is one approach that can deliver on these goals effectively. By combining prevention, early and faster detection, better treatment options and greater patient education, patient centered medicine can be the healthcare model that completely addresses the needs of a patient based on their unique needs which in turn can lead to better health outcome.

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