

P.E.A.R.L.S. Practical Evidence About Real Life Situations



Stimulating the involvement of older patients in their primary care may enhance their health

Clinical Question	How effective are interventions in primary medical care that improve the involvement of older patients (>65 years) in their health care?
Bottom Line	Interventions of a pre-visit booklet and a pre-visit session (either combined or a pre-visit session alone) lead to more questioning behaviour by older people and more self-reported active behaviour than seen in controls.
Context	Many patients believe that they should be more involved in the delivery of their medical care. Empirical studies suggest that patients of average age who are encouraged to participate more actively in treatment decisions have more favourable outcomes, in terms of both physiological and functional status, than those who do not.
Caveat	Only 3 trials were evaluated, and there was no long-term follow-up to see if effects were sustained. No studies measured outcomes relating to the use of health care, health status and wellbeing, or health behaviour. Because the evidence was limited, the authors could not recommend the use of the reviewed intervention in daily practice.
Reference	Wetzels R et al. Interventions for improving older patients' involvement in primary care episodes. Cochrane Reviews, 2007, Issue 1. This review contains 3 trials and 433 participants.
Date (Author)	March 2007 (Brian R McAvoy)

NNT = numbers needed to treat to benefit one person

NNH = numbers needed to harm one person

Both NNT and NNH are only reported if the studies or pooling of studies is statistically significant

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