
Shared Decision-Making in Germany: Patient and Physician Perspectives



Shared decision making is now anchored in the Law on Patient Rights and the Professional Code for Physicians in Germany. Under this new model, both the doctor and patient will decide which treatment to perform. Both parties will exchange information about the patient's disease and treatment options and will jointly choose one treatment.

Two original articles published in *Deutsches Ärzteblatt International* discuss patient involvement and investigate the following: Do patients benefit from shared decision making? Is treatment more effective as a result? How do physicians gain from training in shared decision making?

Katarina Hauser et al. investigate studies where patients took part in shared decision making and compared it to treatment decisions that were made the conventional way. Efficacy of treatment was compared in both patient groups. The systematic review showed that treatment outcomes improved after shared decision making in under half of the studies. The authors point out that they were unable to reach a definite conclusion regarding the concept as they could only evaluate a small number of studies.

Martin Härter et al. conducted a randomised controlled trial with the goal of analysing whether physicians were better prepared for consultations with cancer patients with respect to treatment decisions after being trained for 12 hours in shared decision making. They also investigated whether patients benefited as a result of this training and mutual decision making. For the purpose of the study, the researchers used a questionnaire where they questioned the participants about their confidence and satisfaction with the treatment decisions.

The findings show that there was no difference in the confidence level in patients of physicians who were trained in shared decision making as compared to those whose physicians had not received any. But the study shows that those who were trained had better shared decision-making skills and their patients had lower anxiety and depression levels.

Source: [Deutsches Aerzteblatt International](#)

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