

## Global Challenges in People-Centered E-Health

Yuri Quintana, Charles Safran

*Division of Clinical Informatics, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center and Harvard Medical School*

### Abstract

People-centered health care seeks an active role for the patient while empowering all other members of the health care team. By promoting greater patient responsibility and optimal usage, patient-centered health care leads to improved health outcomes, quality of life and optimal value for health care investment. This paper reviews some definitions of people-centered health care and various e-health approaches around the world used to implement this vision. The barriers and enablers to implementation this type of approach are explored. This paper provides a proposed research agenda for future implementations of people-centered e-health.

### Keywords:

Person-centred health care; participatory health; health services research; individualized care; complex systems; transdisciplinary research; people-centered e-health.

### Introduction

It has been long argued that “the largest and yet least used health care resource, worldwide, is the patient or prospective patient” [1-4]. In recent years, technology has helped to provide patients a greater voice in how health care is accessed and delivered. People-Centered Health Care medicine [5] is a model of medical care in which the active role of the patient is emphasized. The overall vision for people-centered health care is one in which individuals, families, and communities can participate in trusted health systems that respond to their needs in humane and holistic ways. People-centered health care is an umbrella term that better encapsulates the foremost consideration of the patient across all levels of health systems. The definition of people-centered health care has shifted over the years, and the implementation has also shifted; however, the core values have remained the same.

### Methods

We searched the PubMed using the search query (“people-centered” or “patient-centered” or “people-centred” or “patient-centred” or “participatory medicine”) and (“patient empowerment” or “patient participation” or “family engagement” or “social justice”) in titles and abstract, searched the Internet with the same terms. We then reviewed websites and publications and summarized the objectives, approaches and outcomes of some of the frequently cited programs in the areas of patient empowerment, patient participation, family engagement, and social access.

### Conclusions

People-centered health care programs [1-9] provide an opportunity to promote patient empowerment, patient

participation, family engagement, and social justice. Some programs have shown some promising results by showing increasing numbers of patients using the programs but the evidence on outcomes is still limited. Most of the programs are in developed countries. Some international guidelines have been developed for these programs. This paper has proposed some strategies for the design and implementation of programs in developing countries. More research is needed for how to design and evaluate these programs in different settings and cultures. Patient representatives should be part of product design teams, health care provider committees, and in government policy committees so that programs that are created support patient priorities.

### References

- [1] Slack WV. Patient counselling by computer. Zoog S, Yarnall S, eds. The changing health care team. Medical Communications and Services Association, 1976, 108-11.
- [2] Slack WV. The patient's right to decide. *Lancet* 1977; 2:2
- [3] Slack WV, Safran CS, Kowloff HB, Pearce J, Delbanco TL. A computer - administered health screening interview for hospital personnel. *MD Comput* 1995; 12: 25-30
- [4] Safran, C. AMIA President Testimony, Healthcare Information Technology Subcommittee, US House of Representatives, June 17, 2004 <http://waysandmeans.house.gov> Accessed Dec 16, 2014.
- [5] World Health Organization (Western Pacific Region). People-Centred health care - A policy Framework 2007.
- [6] Frydman, Gilles. A Patient-Centric Definition of Participatory Medicine. Mar 17, 2013, <http://www.patientdriven.org/2013/03/a-patient-centric-definition-of-participatory-medicine/>. Accessed December 16, 2014
- [7] Ferguson, T. et.al. e-patients: how they can help us heal healthcare. Originally published in the *Journal of Participatory Medicine* in May 2007. Afterward in 2013. [http://e-patients.net/e-Patients\\_White\\_Paper.pdf](http://e-patients.net/e-Patients_White_Paper.pdf). Accessed December 16, 2014
- [8] Society of Participatory Medicine (SOP) 2014 Homepage. <http://participatorymedicine.org/>. Accessed December 16, 2014.
- [9] Lynn Nielsen-Bohlman L, Panzer AM, and Kindig DA (Eds). *Health Literacy: A Prescription to End Confusion*. Washington, D.C.: National Academies Press, 2004.

### Address for correspondence

Yuri Quintana, Ph.D., Director for Global Health Informatics, Division of Clinical Informatics, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, and Harvard Medical School

Email: [yquintan@bidmc.harvard.edu](mailto:yquintan@bidmc.harvard.edu)