

PARTICIPATORY MEDICINE SURVEY PROVES PATIENTS WANT TO PARTNER WITH THEIR CLINICIANS

A survey conducted at the end of 2015 by ORC International Telephone on behalf of the Society for Participatory Medicine revealed that 88% of patients surveyed believe that working with their healthcare professionals as a partner will enable them to manage and improve their overall health, and 84% believe that self-tracking their health data and sharing it with their health providers between visits will help them improve their outcomes.

Respondents mentioned that measuring their blood pressure, heart rate, respiratory rate, glucose, physical activity and other key health metrics with an easy-to-use device or app, and sharing that data with their healthcare professional, will help them improve their overall health and become more engaged in a collaborative relationship with their health professional. These patients view themselves as key contributors in overseeing and managing their own healthcare, particularly between visits.

The survey was based on landline and mobile telephone interviews with over a thousand US adults evenly divided among males and females. Other survey results include:

- o 76 percent of adults would use a clinically accurate and easy-to-use personal monitoring device;
- o 57 percent of respondents would like to use such a device themselves and share the information revealed with their health care professional;
- o 81 percent of adults would be more likely to use a personal monitoring device if their health professional recommended it.

What this indicates is that there is a complete reversal in the culture of healthcare. For a very long time doctors held all patient data in their office files and made most of the key decisions on treatment choices and health management, with little or no input from the patient. The patient merely followed orders.

Today's engaged and empowered patients are seeking direct involvement in disease management and their overall healthcare. They are also becoming more comfortable and familiar with the many medical devices and apps now available for monitoring their vital indicators. Additionally, patients are willing to use these devices, particularly collaboratively with their healthcare professionals. Although there are still a large number of patients are not yet comfortable with taking responsibility for their healthcare, the numbers are growing, and with good reason.

Research conducted by the [Robert Wood Johnson](#) Foundation and published in February, 2014, indicated that patients who are actively involved in their healthcare are the most likely to stay healthy, manage their conditions, and, potentially, have lower healthcare costs. These patients ask their doctors' questions about their care, follow treatment plans, eat right, exercise and receive health screenings and immunizations. Their cost of care can be as much as 21 percent lower than patients without the interest or the skills to engage in their care. Additionally, patients who are given instruction and tools that help them learn to navigate the healthcare system appear to have the insight about how to overcome barriers that improve their chances of better care.

All of this is happening during a period when physicians are being squeezed by insurers regarding the allotment of time they can spend with each patient. This is also happening at a time and in places where there are far too few primary care physicians to handle overall patient demand.

There are no easy solutions in this transition period. There is also no doubt that patient- physician engagement, and the collaborative model, much discussed and debated in the highest medical circles, is a requirement of the times.