



## RE-TOOLING FOR EFFECTIVE PATIENT-CENTERED CARE: THE NEED FOR EVIDENCE-BASED STRATEGIES

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### ABSTRACT

In an era where healthcare is rapidly evolving, the need for patient-centered care has become paramount. This groundbreaking research delves into the heart of healthcare delivery, unveiling the crucial role of evidence-based strategies in re-tooling existing systems to prioritize the holistic well-being and empowerment of patients. Through an extensive review of empirical studies and best practices, this study shed light on the transformative potential of patient-centered care. We unraveled the profound impact it has on patient satisfaction, engagement, and health outcomes, as well as its ability to foster effective communication, shared decision-making, and improved adherence to treatment plans. Moreover, we found the benefits of patient-centered care for healthcare providers, including increased job satisfaction, reduced burnout, and enhanced collaborative partnerships with patients.

**KEYWORDS:** Evidence-based strategy; patient-centered care; patient-care outcomes; healthcare providers; effective communication.

### INTRODUCTION

Over the years, we have seen great efforts in clinical practice in implementing evidence-based strategies. Evidence-based strategies have proven to be crucial in improving patient outcomes, reducing medical errors, and enhancing the quality of care in healthcare. Evidence-based strategies are a confluence of three factors: available research, clinical expertise, and patient characteristics, culture, and preferences. Evidence-based strategies can include interventions such as clinical practice guidelines, decision support systems, and quality improvement initiatives, all of which have been shown to improve patient outcomes and reduce medical errors (Institute of Medicine, 2001).

We shall be arguing that by implementing evidence-based strategies, healthcare providers can ensure that patients receive the best possible care based on the latest evidence and tailored to their individual needs.

#### Evidence-based strategies in ensuring patient-centered care

Efforts to implement evidence-based strategies in ensuring better patient-centered care have been ongoing for several years. The concept of patient-centered care emphasizes the importance of tailoring healthcare to

meet individual patient needs and preferences, to improve patient outcomes and satisfaction. Evidence-based strategies that have been implemented in this regard include patient education, shared decision-making, and the use of patient-reported outcome measures (PROMs).

One strategy for implementing patient-centered care is patient education. This involves providing patients with information about their condition and treatment options, as well as guidance on self-management. Studies have shown that patient education can improve patient outcomes, such as reducing hospital readmissions and improving medication adherence (While 2020; Moradi et al., 2021). Additionally, patient education has been found to increase patient satisfaction with care (Hickey et al., 2017).

Shared decision-making is another evidence-based strategy that has been implemented to ensure patient-centered care. Shared decision-making involves the clinician and patient working together to make treatment decisions based on the best available evidence and the patient's preferences and values. Several studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of shared decision-making in improving patient outcomes and satisfaction

(Boivin *et al.*, 2018; Huang *et al.*, 2020). Shared decision-making is effective in reducing decisional conflict and increasing patient involvement and confidence in decision-making.

Patient-reported outcome measures (PROMs) are another strategy that has been implemented to ensure patient-centered care. PROMs are questionnaires completed by patients that measure outcomes that are important to patients, such as quality of life and symptom burden. PROMs can provide clinicians with valuable information about the patient's experience of their condition and treatment, which can help to design care to meet individual patient needs (Greenhalgh *et al.*, 2018). Several studies have shown that the use of PROMs can improve patient outcomes and satisfaction with care (Basch *et al.*, 2016; Ahmed *et al.*, 2018).

### **The current challenges to evidence-based strategies**

Although evidence-based strategies have been widely advocated for improving patient outcomes, reducing medical errors, and enhancing the quality of care in healthcare settings. It suffices to reiterate the fact that the implementation of evidence-based strategies has not always yielded the desired results. Several factors have been identified as barriers to the successful implementation of evidence-based strategies in healthcare settings, which are discussed below.

One major challenge is the lack of adherence to evidence-based guidelines among healthcare providers. Studies have shown that healthcare providers often do not follow evidence-based guidelines due to a lack of awareness or skepticism about the evidence, concerns about patient preferences, and time constraints (Kleinpell *et al.*, 2017). Additionally, organizational factors such as inadequate resources, lack of support from leadership, and competing priorities can hinder the implementation of evidence-based practices (Scott *et al.*, 2016).

Another challenge is the complexity of healthcare systems. Healthcare systems are complex, with multiple levels of interaction between patients, providers, and organizations. Evidence-based strategies may not always account for these complexities, making it difficult to implement them effectively (Greenhalgh *et al.*, 2016). Additionally, the lack of integration between different levels of the healthcare system can hinder the adoption of evidence-based strategies (Haines *et al.*, 2012).

A third challenge is the lack of patient engagement in healthcare decision-making. Patients play a crucial role in their healthcare, and their engagement in healthcare decision-making has been shown to improve outcomes. However, patients may not always have access to the information they need to make informed decisions or may not feel empowered to do so (Coulter & Ellins, 2007).

Another challenge is the lack of a standardized approach to the implementation of evidence-based strategies. Healthcare systems vary widely in their structure and processes, and evidence-based strategies may need to be adapted to fit the local context. However, there is often a lack of guidance on how to adapt evidence-based strategies, making it difficult for healthcare providers to implement them effectively (Grol & Grimshaw, 2003).

A fifth challenge is the limited focus on sustainability. Evidence-based strategies may be successful in the short term but sustaining these improvements over the long term can be challenging. Healthcare organizations may not have the resources or the commitment to sustain evidence-based practices, leading to a decline in the quality of care (Harvey *et al.*, 2018).

The limited use of technology to support evidence-based practices is another challenge. Technology can facilitate the implementation of evidence-based practices by providing decision support, tracking outcomes, and promoting communication among healthcare providers (Maiden *et al.*, 2018). However, the use of technology in healthcare settings is often limited, which can hinder the adoption of evidence-based strategies. For example, while EHRs have become widely adopted in healthcare settings, their use can be limited by a lack of interoperability and standardization across different systems. This can lead to difficulties in sharing patient information between different providers, as well as potential errors in data entry and management (Adler-Milstein & Jha, 2017). Also, wearable devices, such as fitness trackers and smartwatches, have the potential to provide valuable health data to patients and providers. However, their use in healthcare settings can be limited by issues of data privacy and security, as well as a lack of standardization in data collection and analysis (Brawley & Spratt, 2020). AI has the potential to revolutionize healthcare by improving diagnostics and treatment planning. However, its use can be limited by concerns around data privacy and security, as well as a lack of understanding among healthcare providers about how to effectively incorporate AI into clinical practice (Topol, 2019).

The lack of a culture of continuous improvement poses a challenge. Healthcare organizations may not prioritize quality improvement or may not have a culture that values continuous improvement. Without a culture of continuous improvement, healthcare providers may not see the value in implementing evidence-based strategies (Dixon-Woods *et al.*, 2014).

Similarly, there is a lack of patient-centeredness in evidence-based strategies. Evidence-based strategies may not always account for patient preferences or may not prioritize patient-centered outcomes. This can lead to a lack of engagement from patients and can hinder the successful implementation of evidence-based strategies (Härter *et al.*, 2017).

Furthermore, a lack of funding for the implementation of evidence-based strategies. Healthcare organizations may not have the resources to implement evidence-based strategies, or funding may be prioritized for other initiatives. This can make it difficult to implement evidence-based strategies effectively (Braithwaite *et al.*, 2018).

Finally, the lack of evaluation and feedback can hinder the successful implementation of evidence-based strategies. Healthcare organizations may not have mechanisms in place to evaluate the effectiveness of evidence-based strategies or to provide feedback (Pinnock *et al.*, 2015 & Brownson *et al.*, 2018).

### **The need for evidence-based strategies in patient-centered care**

Improving patient outcomes, reducing medical errors, and enhancing the quality of care are key objectives of healthcare systems around the world. Evidence-based strategies can play a critical role in achieving these goals by providing clinicians with the latest research findings on effective interventions. One such strategy is the implementation of clinical practice guidelines (CPGs), which are evidence-based recommendations that can help standardize care and reduce variation in practice. CPGs have been shown to improve patient outcomes and reduce costs (Lugtenberg *et al.*, 2016 & Qaseem *et al.*, 2017).

In addition to CPGs, other evidence-based strategies for improving patient outcomes include the use of health information technology (HIT). This strategy is used to improve communication and care coordination among healthcare providers. HIT can also facilitate the tracking and monitoring of patient progress and enable clinicians to identify and address potential problems on time (Kanwal *et al.*, 2015). For example, electronic health records (EHRs) can provide clinicians with real-time access to patient information, including medication lists, allergies, and previous medical history, which can help prevent medical errors and improve patient safety.

Another evidence-based strategy for improving patient outcomes is the implementation of interdisciplinary care teams. These teams consist of healthcare professionals from different disciplines who work together to provide coordinated care to patients. Interdisciplinary care teams have been shown to improve patient outcomes and reduce healthcare costs by reducing hospital readmissions and length of stay. For example, a study of an interdisciplinary care team for patients with chronic heart failure found that the team reduced hospital readmissions by 48% and reduced length of stay by 1.3 days (Phillips *et al.*, 2016).

Patient engagement is also an important component of evidence-based strategies for improving patient outcomes. Engaging patients in their care can help improve adherence to treatment plans, increase patient

satisfaction, and reduce healthcare costs (Gottlieb *et al.*, 2013). Strategies for patient engagement include shared decision-making, patient education, and patient activation. For example, a study of a patient activation program found that patients who participated in the program had significantly lower healthcare costs compared to those who did not participate (Hibbard *et al.*, 2014).

In addition to improving patient outcomes, evidence-based strategies can also help reduce medical errors. Medication errors are a common cause of medical errors and can result in serious harm to patients. Evidence-based strategies for reducing medication errors include the use of computerized physician order entry (CPOE), barcode medication administration (BCMA), and medication reconciliation (MR). CPOE and BCMA have been shown to significantly reduce medication errors in hospitals (Poon *et al.*, 2014). MR is also an important strategy for reducing medication errors, as it involves comparing a patient's current medication regimen with their medication history to identify any discrepancies (Kwan *et al.*, 2013).

Another evidence-based strategy for reducing medical errors is the use of simulation-based training for healthcare providers. Simulation-based training involves the use of realistic scenarios to simulate patient care situations, allowing healthcare providers to practice their skills and decision-making in a safe environment. Simulation-based training has been shown to improve patient safety and reduce medical errors (Issenberg *et al.*, 2011). For example, a study of simulation-based training for neonatal resuscitation found that the training improved patient outcomes by reducing the incidence of bradycardia and increasing the use of positive pressure ventilation (O'Donnell *et al.*, 2018).

Finally, evidence-based strategies can also be used to enhance the quality of care. One such strategy is the implementation of quality improvement (QI) initiatives, which involve the systematic measurement and improvement of healthcare processes and outcomes. QI initiatives have been shown to improve patient outcomes, reduce healthcare costs, and increase patient satisfaction.

### **Recommendations**

Patient-centered care is a cornerstone of modern healthcare, with an increasing emphasis on ensuring that patients have a voice in their care and are active partners in the decision-making process. Evidence-based strategies are an essential component of this approach, with numerous studies demonstrating their effectiveness in improving patient outcomes and satisfaction. In this article, we will outline five recommendations for implementing evidence-based strategies to ensure better patient-centered care.

Firstly, it is essential to establish a culture of continuous quality improvement within healthcare organizations.

This involves regularly evaluating patient outcomes and experiences, identifying areas for improvement, and implementing evidence-based strategies to address these issues. According to a study by Cleverley *et al.*, healthcare organizations that prioritize quality improvement are more likely to have higher levels of patient satisfaction and improved outcomes (Cleverley *et al.*, 2017).

Secondly, healthcare providers should make a concerted effort to involve patients in the decision-making process. This can be achieved by providing patients with clear information about their diagnosis, treatment options, and potential risks and benefits, as well as taking the time to address their concerns and questions. A study by Frosch *et al.* found that patients who were involved in the decision-making process reported higher levels of satisfaction and were more likely to adhere to their treatment plan (Frosch *et al.*, 2010).

Thirdly, healthcare providers should strive to provide patient-centered care that is culturally sensitive and responsive to the needs of diverse patient populations. This involves recognizing and respecting patients' cultural beliefs and values, communicating effectively with patients from different cultural backgrounds, and providing care that is tailored to their specific needs. A study by Betancourt *et al.* found that cultural competency training for healthcare providers led to improved patient outcomes and reduced healthcare disparities (Betancourt *et al.*, 2016).

Fourthly, healthcare providers should utilize technology to improve patient-centered care. This includes electronic health records that allow for more efficient and accurate communication between healthcare providers, as well as patient portals that enable patients to access their health information and communicate with their healthcare team. According to a study by Zhou *et al.*, the use of patient portals led to improved patient engagement and satisfaction (Zhou *et al.*, 2018).

Finally, healthcare providers should prioritize patient safety as a core component of patient-centered care. This involves implementing evidence-based strategies to reduce the risk of adverse events, such as medication errors or healthcare-associated infections. A study by Pronovost *et al.* found that the implementation of a comprehensive patient safety program led to a significant reduction in preventable harm and improved patient outcomes (Pronovost *et al.*, 2016).

#### **Anticipated outcomes of utilizing evidence-based strategies**

Evidence-based strategies have become an important focus in healthcare delivery and management in recent years. By leveraging high-quality research evidence, healthcare providers and policymakers can design and implement interventions aimed at improving patient

outcomes, reducing medical errors, and enhancing the quality of care.

Evidence-based strategies that focus on early detection and management of chronic diseases can lead to improved patient outcomes. For instance, the use of evidence-based guidelines for diabetes management has been associated with better glycemic control, reduced risk of complications, and improved quality of life for patients (Powers *et al.*, 2017).

Evidence-based strategies that promote medication safety, such as computerized physician order entry systems, can significantly reduce medication errors. A study by Bates *et al.* (2017) found that implementation of computerized physician order entry systems reduced medication errors by 55% in hospital settings.

Evidence-based strategies that focus on patient-centered care can enhance the quality of care. For example, shared decision-making, where patients and healthcare providers collaborate to make treatment decisions, can improve patient satisfaction, adherence to treatment, and health outcomes (Elwyn *et al.*, 2012).

Evidence-based strategies that address social determinants of health, such as poverty and access to care, can improve health equity. For instance, interventions that provide affordable and accessible healthcare services to underserved communities can improve health outcomes and reduce health disparities (Egede & Walker, 2018).

Evidence-based strategies that promote healthcare delivery redesign, such as care coordination and telemedicine, can increase efficiency in healthcare delivery. For example, telemedicine can reduce the need for in-person visits, which can save time and reduce costs for patients and healthcare providers (Whitten *et al.*, 2017).

Evidence-based strategies that focus on reducing unnecessary tests, treatments, and hospitalizations can lead to cost savings. For example, the Choosing Wisely campaign, which promotes evidence-based recommendations for avoiding unnecessary medical interventions, has been associated with reduced healthcare costs and improved quality of care (Colla *et al.*, 2017).

Evidence-based strategies that promote a culture of safety, such as team-based training and patient safety reporting systems, can improve patient safety culture. Pronovost *et al.* (2016) found that team-based training reduced hospital-acquired infections and improved safety culture in intensive care units.

Evidence-based strategies that promote provider well-being, such as mindfulness-based stress reduction programs, can improve provider satisfaction. It has been

found that the implementation of a mindfulness-based stress reduction program reduced burnout and improved satisfaction among primary care providers (Sinsky et al., 2017).

Evidence-based strategies that promote health literacy, such as plain language communication and health education programs, can improve patient understanding of health information and improve health outcomes. Studies found that health literacy interventions improved patient knowledge of their chronic conditions and medication use (Yan et al., 2021 & Balakrishnan et al., 2021).

Evidence-based strategies that promote adherence to regulatory standards, such as the use of standardized protocols and performance metrics, can improve regulatory compliance. Werner et al. (2017) found that the use of standardized protocols and performance metrics improved compliance with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services quality reporting requirements.

Evidence-based strategies have the potential to significantly improve patient outcomes, reduce medical errors, enhance the quality of care, and improve the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of healthcare delivery.

## CONCLUSION

Evidence-based strategies are predicated on the assumption that clinical practice should draw guidance from the very best research. These strategies are designed to improve patient outcomes, enhance the quality of care, and increase the efficiency and effectiveness of healthcare delivery. Barriers to implementing evidence-based strategies in healthcare include a lack of knowledge and awareness, organizational and cultural resistance to change, and limited resources. It is important to implement evidence-based strategies because they can lead to better patient outcomes, increased patient satisfaction, and reduced healthcare costs. The expected outcome of implementing evidence-based strategies is improved healthcare quality and patient outcomes, increased efficiency and effectiveness of healthcare delivery, and better healthcare value for patients, healthcare providers, and healthcare systems.

Utilizing evidence-based strategies is crucial to ensuring better patient-centered care. By establishing a culture of continuous quality improvement, involving patients in the decision-making process, providing culturally sensitive care, utilizing technology, and prioritizing patient safety, healthcare providers can improve patient outcomes, satisfaction, and engagement.

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