

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.
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. As the evidence was limited, the authors could not recommend the use of the reviewed intervention in routine primary care.
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.
Cochrane Systematic Review	Wetzels R et al. Interventions for improving older patients' involvement in primary care episodes. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2007, Issue 1. Art. No.: CD004273. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD004273.pub2. This review contains 3 trials with a total of 433 participants.
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