

Voice of the Expert

Patient Centered Health Care

S Arul Rhaj

Prof (Dr) S Arulrhaj is a renowned physician. He is the Past National President, IMA, Past National President, API & Past Commonwealth President, CMA, UK.

JIMA interviewed Dr S Arulraj for his expert opinions regarding Patient Centred Care

Q 1 : How to define in a formal way Patient Centered Care ?

Ans : The IOM (Institute of Medicine) defines patient centered care as: **“Providing care that is respectful of, and responsive to, individual patient preferences, needs and values, and ensuring that patient values guide all clinical decisions.”**

Patient centered care respects and integrates a patient’s values, preferences, and goals into clinical decision-making and outcome assessments. This partnership between caregiver and patient addresses the physical, mental, spiritual, and social determinants of a patient’s health to achieve better outcomes.

Centricity in Healthcare

- **Doctor centric** – **Patients**
- **Disease centric** – **Doctors**
- **Hospital centric** – **Corporate**
- **Patient centricity** – **Need of the Hour**

Q 2 : What is Patient Centricity?

Ans : Patient centricity should be defined as ‘Putting the patient first in an open and sustained engagement of the patient to respectfully and compassionately achieve the best experience and outcome for that person and their family’. The patient-centric approach involves providing special medical services fashioned to cater to the individual values, needs, and preferences of a patient in addition to professional consultations and guidance of a health expert. There is a paradigm shift in the healthcare system.

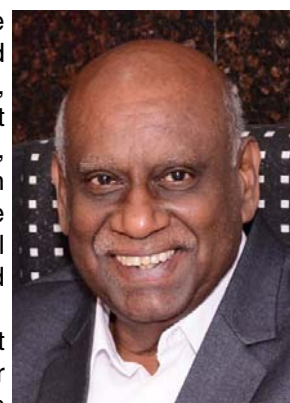
Q 3 : When you are mentioning Patient Centric Focus, in this context would you please let us know about Patient-centric Culture and what are the fundamentals of Patient Centered Care ?

Ans : In a patient-centric culture, employees are able to see beyond their own roles and contribute to delivering what patients need, even if it’s outside the scope of their job descriptions.

The Fundamentals of Patient-centered care (PCC)

Health care is a service industry. This may sound like mere common sense, but if truly embraced and built into the health care system, it is a transformative idea. In important ways health care is unlike commercial services like hair salons and hardware stores.

Sick people are not shoppers and their relationship with providers is qualitatively different from their relationship with sales clerks. But one concept fundamental to the commercial world is relevant to health care: **the customer is always right.**



Prof (Dr) S Arulrhaj
MD, FRCP (Glasg)

Q 4 : If we accept the concept that “the patient is always right” then we need to know what Patients Want from us?

Ans : The Change Foundation in Ontario has done a lot of work on PCC. A major literature review confirmed that there is very little research that examines health care integration from the patient perspective. The Foundation conducted a series of focus groups to get a better understanding of the patient experience. Many implicit definitions of the elements of PCC emerged, among which were:

(1) Comprehensive care – all of their needs, not just some, should be addressed

(2) Coordination of care – someone is in charge, there is someone to go to who knows you and will help you navigate the system

(3) Timeliness – they should get care when they need it and where a sequence of services is required, the intervals should be short

(4) Functioning e-health – provide information once, ensure that it is accessible to those who need it, give patients access to the records and the opportunity to add

(5) Clear and reliable communication – listen, explain, clarify, ensure that the provider team members are on the same page, consistency of messages, access to phone or internet consultations

(6) Convenience – minimize the need to go to different physical locations for services; open access, same day scheduling; no unnecessary barriers or steps to getting to the right provider

(7) Respect – for their time, intelligence; for the validity of their stories; for their feedback about quality and effectiveness; for their environment and family caregiving partners

Q 5 : What are the Key Elements of Patient Centered Care ?

Ans : Patient and family centered care encourages the active collaboration and shared decision making between patients, families, and providers to design and manage a customized and comprehensive care plan:

- The health care system's mission, vision, values, leadership, and quality-improvement drivers are aligned to patient centered goals.
- Care is collaborative, coordinated, and accessible. The right care is provided at the right time and the right place.
- Care focuses on physical comfort as well as emotional well-being.
- Patient and family preferences, values, cultural traditions, and socioeconomic conditions are respected.
- Patients and their families are an expected part of the care team and play a role in decisions at the patient and system level.
- The presence of family members in the care setting is encouraged and facilitated.

Information is shared fully and in a timely manner so that patients and their family members can make informed decisions.

Patient-Centered Care



Q 6 : When we are discussing about Patient Centered Care, Picker's Eight Principles are extremely crucial to acknowledge. Would you please let us know briefly about these principles?

Ans :

- (1) Respect for patients' values, preferences and expressed needs
- (2) Coordination and integration of care
- (3) Information and education
- (4) Physical comfort
- (5) Emotional support and alleviation of fear and anxiety
- (6) Involvement of family and friends
- (7) Continuity and transition
- (8) Access to care

To promote ideal patient care, follow these evidence-based directives:

Make healthcare accessible

You can't implement patient-centered care if the people who need it can't locate or travel to your office, clinic, or hospital. To get ambulatory service, your future patients must know about your facility and the transportation options available to reach it. You should also make sure the referrals you provide to accessible specialists are clear and easy to follow.

Respect patients' values, needs, and preferences

- Set aside what you may have learned in medical school and open your mind to the continually evolving integrative health care landscape your patients live and work in.
- If they've researched and successfully applied botanical medicine in the past, integrate it into your medical care plan.
- If your patient's family has been traumatized by the opioid crisis and they prefer pain management via acupuncture, follow their lead.
- If their religious or cultural values promote or reject certain treatments, respect that fact. What you may have learned in medical school and open your mind to the community.

Coordinate care

Focus groups at the aforementioned research centers have documented how illness caused vulnerability makes patients feel powerless. You can empower them by actively participating in and fully understanding their care plan. When you coordinate frontline patient care, clinical care, ancillary care, and support services, be flexible. Follow up to ensure each clinician is informed about each step in the patient's care plan.

Inform and educate your patients

Curious, intelligent patients often feel their providers patronize and condescend when informing them about their condition, prognosis, or treatment. Not telling them all the details can cause patients to become suspicious, angry, and bitter. They may lack the motivation to follow your care plan if they fear you don't truly care about or respect them. You can easily counter this fear by providing thorough but easy-to-read information on their clinical status, progress and prognosis, care processes, and autonomous selfcare. People who feel they're in control of their healthcare tend to take control of their healthcare.

Provide emotional and physical comfort

Ideal patient care requires acute attention to the healthcare environment. If your office, clinic, or hospital is unsterile, cold, cluttered, fluorescently lit, or garishly and uncomfortably furnished, it can negatively impact mood and even induce anxiety.

Once they're physically comfortable and calm, your patients may be more likely to discuss their take on pain management and disclose their need for assistance with daily activities. Listen and resolve any issues immediately before their trust wanes. If you comfort and reassure them, they'll trust you. Why is reassurance important in health and social care? If patients aren't confident you have their best interests at heart, they'll turn elsewhere—and walk away from an optimal health outcome.

Finances are a huge source of anxiety that can be reduced with a bit of research and budgeting.

Involve Family and Friends

You can dramatically improve the patient experience by accommodating family and close friends at your facility.

- Involve them in your decision-making if you see they are your patient's deeply trusted advocates.

- Make sure you explain your patient centered care plan to all of them so they can participate and ensure consistency.

- Provide any logistical resources or emotional support needed to caregivers, who so often experience burnout and health issues.

- Demonstrate that you recognize their needs and are available to act as their trusted consultant and supporter.

Ensure continuity of care

- Patient centered care does not end when the patient leaves your clinic or hospital room.

- Make sure the patient's family and caretakers are fully vested in your care plan and understand the patient's physical limitations, dietary requirements, and medication schedules.

- Help them coordinate ongoing treatments and ensure they're informed about access to physical, financial, clinical, and social support.

- Nurses often provide the first touchpoint with patients to set the stage for these new expectations. What is patient centered care in nursing, and how can it be implemented?

- According to the Journal of the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners⁴, effective patient centered care practices require consistent communication, shared decision-making, and dedicated patient education—which is often first introduced to patients by nurses.

DIRECTIVES :

- To Make healthcare accessible
- To Respect patients' values, needs, and preferences
- To Coordinate care
- To Inform and educate your patients
- To Provide emotional and physical comfort
- To Involve Family and Friends

Q 7 : Please let us know about a few examples showing beneficial effect of Patient Centered Care

Ans 7 :

- Research conducted by **Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield** in 2014 revealed that patients who participated in patient centered programs had a 9% lower total cost than those who participated in traditional fee-for-service care models.

- A study conducted in **Sundaram Arulrhaj Hospital, Tuticorin** between 2020-2021 shows, Patients who received patient centered care were 9% less likely to be admitted to a hospital and 6% less likely to end up in the emergency room.

- A study at **Aruls Diabetic Centre, Tuticorin** shows 14% better TIME IN RANGE with continuous glucose monitoring managed according to patient centered care compared to traditional care.

- A study at department of cardiology **Idhayalaya, Sundaram Arulrhaj Hospital, Tuticorin** shows 13% less readmission for follow up cases of heart failure with reduced ejection fraction participating in patient centered care compared to traditional care.

Q 8 : How Patient Centered Healthcare Can Improve Quality

Ans 8 :

- Healthcare is evolving from a model in which the physician made almost all treatment decisions, unquestioned, and based on clinical experience, to a

patient centered model. Under the new but still-evolving model, patients are active participants in their own care. Increasingly, clinicians are treating patients who make decisions about healthcare services based on their own needs and preferences.

- IOM has identified patient-centeredness as one of the six domains that define quality care — the others being safety, timeliness, effectiveness, efficiency, and equity.

- Patient centered care has enjoyed increased attention recently. Over the past 30 years, an increasing proportion of Americans have collectively and individually demanded a greater say in decision-making and many other areas. In addition, patient centeredness is a goal of the Value-Driven Health Care Initiative, a major effort by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to stimulate quality improvement.

The essence of patient centered care is captured in the maxim, “**Nothing about me without me**” (Delbanco, 2001)⁷. In its landmark report, *Crossing the Quality Chasm*, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) defined patient centered care as “**care that is respectful of and responsive to individual patient preferences, needs, and values and [ensures] that patient values guide all clinical decisions**” (Institute of Medicine, 2001).

Q 9 : would you please tell us about Physicians' Role in Patient Centered Care?

Ans : We have a long way to go in offering patient centered care. The Commonwealth Fund recently surveyed physicians nationally, examining practices that are commonly accepted as patient centered, and arrived at some disturbing conclusions about the **low frequency of patient centered practices** (Audet, 2006):

- Only about one-half (54%) of all physicians send reminder notices for preventive or follow-up care.
- Just over one-third (36%) of primary care physicians (PCPs) conduct patient surveys and use the data to improve their practice.
- Only 26% of PCPs have medical records and lab tests readily available.
- Less than a quarter (23%) of PCPs have electronic medical records.
- Barely one in five (21%) of PCPs “always or often” furnish patients with information on the quality of care of referral physicians.
- Only 18% of all physicians give patients the

opportunity to ask questions and transmit information through e-mail.

Q 10 : What are the different roles of Patient in Patient Centered Health Care

Ans : Individually, each of these statistics would be startling. Taken together, they paint a clear picture of a healthcare system that does a poor job of placing the patient at the center of their own care. This must change. We must recognize that patients are the best source of information about their own bodies and about how they prefer to be treated. They should be active participants in decisions about their treatment.

Patients' day-to-day activities, such as diet, medications, exercise, habits and sleep, have a substantial impact on their health (Wu, 2000). When patients play an active role in their healthcare, they are more likely to comply with their treatment and enjoy **safer care**.

Q 11 : We often hear about Shared decision making, how it is important in patient centered care?

Ans : Shared decision making takes into account the findings from current evidence-based practice, in addition to the patient's values, desires, and preferences.

- Patients should be actively involved in making decisions about their care.
- Shared decision making is a process by which nurses help patients make **informed healthcare decisions. Eg; Surgeries, PCI, Chemotherapy etc.**
- **Shared decision making improves patient autonomy.**

Patients have to make many healthcare decisions during hospital stays and throughout care. These decisions can vary dramatically in context and severity. For example, one patient may need to choose the type of facility, he or she will be discharged to and another may need to make a simple medication or activity decision.

Patient involvement in Clinical decisions

Patient participation means involvement of the patient in decision making or expressing opinions about different treatment methods, which includes sharing information, feelings and signs and accepting health team instructions.

Q 12 : Is there any way to Measure the results of patient-centered care?

Ans : The first standardized survey in the US is the Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare

Providers and Systems Survey (CAHPS®). This data collection tool was developed by The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ). It measures patient experience by asking discharged patients whether they got the care they needed quickly enough and whether they enjoyed thorough, compassionate communication with doctors, care providers, and customer service representatives. These ratings are critical to the health of your practice.

Q13: Would you briefly enumerate the importance of AHRQ in Patient Centered Care?

Ans : Quality as we know it is an elusive concept for even sophisticated consumers. To help bridge the gap, the **Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)** has provided tools to foster patient centeredness and consumer participation in healthcare decision making.

AHRQ's SHARE Approach is a **five-step process** for shared decision making that includes exploring and comparing the benefits, harms, and risks of each option through meaningful dialogue about what matters most to the patient.



Q 14 : How patient-centered care will help your care team thrive?

Ans : Despite its name, patient centered care offers just as many benefits for providers. This holistic healthcare approach will help your care team:

- Improve patient outcomes
- Reduce expenses and total cost of care: Research conducted by Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield in 2014 revealed that patients who participated in patient centered programs had a 9% lower total cost than those who participated in traditional fee-for-service care models
- Enhance reputation
- Boost staff satisfaction
- **Streamline resource allocation**

Q 15 : In this era of newer Technologies, how could we utilize them for patient centered healthcare?

Ans : Advances in genetic analysis and bioinformatics show promise in the development of personal diagnosis and treatment that will become an integral part of the patient record. The Internet has made world-wide access to the medical record possible. In addition, the Internet provides the means for remote diagnostics and intervention.

Smart Care: Integrating Blockchain Technology into the Design of Patient centered Healthcare Systems¹¹

Cross institutional sharing of medical data is essential to provide effective collaborative treatment and clinical decisions for patients. Medical data privacy involves ensuring only authorized parties may access the health records under the awareness and approval of patients in any circumstances. This is crucial to any healthcare system because the protection of patients' clinical data is not only an ethical responsibility but also a legal mandate.

Q 16 : Can Artificial intelligence Boost Efficiency in this regard?

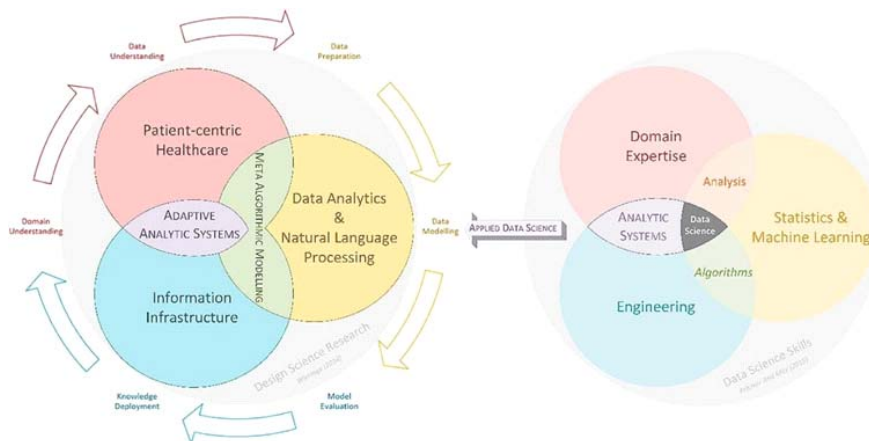
Ans : Today, much of a doctor's daily routine is administrative and logistical, rather than patient centric. One study even found that physicians spend twice as much time updating electronic health records (EHRs) as they do providing direct care to patients.

AI has the potential to improve the efficiency of interpreting x-rays, Scans. Advances in computer imaging have made it so that AI can automatically sort through images to find the best match, which it then presents to the radiologist with a few neighboring options. AI could also play a significant role in the development of new drugs and treatments especially previously unknown or unidentifiable treatments for chronic conditions and genetic disorders at a significantly lower cost.

Q 17 : Applied data science is extremely important in patient centric healthcare. How Adaptive analytic systems could empower both physicians and patients?

- Ans :**
- Applied data science for healthcare empowers physicians and patients.
 - Applied data science focuses on adaptive analytic systems to improve daily care.
 - Adaptive analytic systems for patient centredness enable personalised medicine.

- Empowerment of physicians and patients accelerates healthcare innovation.
- Meta-algorithmic modelling provides a framework for the post-algorithmic era.



Q 18 : Please summarize Benefits and advantages of patient centered care.

Ans : The primary goal and benefit of patient centered care is to improve **individual** health outcomes, not just **population** health outcomes, although population outcomes may also improve. Not only do patients benefit, but providers and health care systems benefit as well, through:

- Improved satisfaction scores among patients and their families.
- Enhanced reputation of providers among health care consumers.
- Better morale and productivity among clinicians and ancillary staff.
- Improved resource allocation.
- Reduced expenses and increased financial margins throughout the continuum of care.
- Improved patient satisfaction
- Improved reputation for your organization

Better job satisfaction for staff, improve your care team's job satisfaction, promote ideal patient care, and attract new patients by designing a holistic, patient centered, software-enabled care plan. Then, enjoy the benefits.

Outcomes of PCC are :

- Violence on Healthcare will decline
- Doctor Patients Relations will improve
- Doctor will command more respect in society
- Healthcare become an effective appreciable companion of human life

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Thank you again Dr Arul Rhaj for your time. We are sure our readers will love to go through this insightful perspective of *Patient Centred Care*. We hope to speak with you again in the future.