

What is quality of care?

“The degree to which health services for individuals and populations increase the likelihood of desired health outcomes and are consistent with current professional knowledge.” (Institute of Medicine, 2001).



6 dimensions of quality:

- (1) effectiveness
 - (2) accessibility
 - (3) equity
 - (4) acceptability/patient-centeredness
 - (5) safety
 - (6) efficiency
- (World Health Organisation, 2006)”.

WHY IT IS IMPORTANT?

Patients everywhere in the EU should have **equitable access to healthcare** that is of **high quality**. In 2008 EPF called on the European Commission for “an independent body responsible for setting and monitoring performance against safety standards, with a well-defined set of quality criteria standards and an ongoing monitoring approach”.



There is a need for more systematic understanding about how patients define **quality of healthcare**. EPF, in collaboration with its members, works towards a definition of “quality” in healthcare from the **patients’ perspective**.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PATIENT-CENTREDNESS:

Patient-centredness is a core component of quality in healthcare and a form of prevention in chronic disease care that contributes to quality of life and health outcomes. Patient-centred care models have been shown to be cost-effective as well as to improve the patient experience and clinical outcomes.

Patient-centredness involves:

- being responsive to patients’ needs and preferences
- empowering patients and their families
- enabling their participation as active and equal participants in the care process
- integrating the different aspects of health and social care around the families’ needs



Key aspects of patient-centredness:

- empathy or compassion
- human dignity
- patient engagement and participation
- valuing the patient experience of care
- shared decision-making
- self-management
- health literacy¹

¹ EPF global sister organisation, IAPO, in 2005 defined six principles of patient-centered healthcare: 1. Respect; 2. Choice; 3. Patient empowerment and involvement; 4. Access; 5. Information; 6. Patient involvement in health policy.

WHAT IS THE EU DOING?



There has been a gradual shift at European level towards addressing quality in a broader sense than only patient safety. EPF has been an active contributor to EU discussions as a member of the European Commission's expert group on Patient Safety and Quality of Care.



Action at European level has so far focused on voluntary collaboration and exchange of best practice. However, Directive 2011/24/EU requires Member States to implement standards and guidelines that are transparent to the public. It also requires Member States to cooperate with each other on safety and quality standards.

EPF CALLS FOR:

- Member States to **involve patient organisations** and representatives in the development of policies and programmes on quality of care
- **Patient-centredness** to be considered a **key quality criterion** for healthcare organisations and practitioners
- Development of a **common approach and tools** for **measuring patient-centredness** as a key aspect of quality of care under the EU framework for health system performance assessment (HSPA)
- Implementation of **systematic mechanisms to collect feedback** from patients and families to identify areas for improvement
- EU funding for research on **innovative healthcare organisation** and delivery models and on **evaluating the patient experience** in the healthcare system



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This leaflet received funding under an operating grant from the European Union's Health Programme (2014-2020).

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