

Defining important health care concepts



BACKGROUND

Terminology can create barriers to understanding, so it's important that the words used by clinicians, policy-makers, and patients are clearly understood and consistently used in the same way. Among these important terms are patient-centered care, person-centered care, and precision medicine.

PATIENT-CENTERED CARE

Patient-centered care is defined as the delivery of the same care to every patient with the same complaint and diagnosis. It's based on observations and tests, but may not consider the preferences and values of each specific patient. Instead it focuses on and treats distinct body systems.

PERSON-CENTERED CARE

A person-centered care approach is a more reflective, inclusive, and holistic approach. It conceptualizes body systems as an interconnected whole and focuses on individualizing treatment. It also conveys to the patient the values of respect, trust, and shared decision-making when it comes to health care. Person-centered care is not tied to the provision of specific interventions that patient desires but rather to the provision of care that is important to the patient.

The legal responsibilities of the care provider in a person-centered model of care can be difficult to describe. For example, it can be difficult to determine whether to strictly observe recommended guidelines or to yield to the patient's refusal to accept such treatment. If the patient is treated and then develops a complication, the legal situation can be complicated.

PRECISION MEDICINE

Precision medicine, also termed personal medicine, customizes interventions based on the individual patient's genetic or other

biological makeup with the goal of achieving better health care outcomes. The strategies used are usually based on measurable biomarkers but then modified based on individual situations. They include the patient in an active role and partner in making health care decisions. In precision health care delivery the health outcome tends to be predictable because it is based on well-defined factors.

Evidence-based care includes the patient's values and preferences as core elements. This approach can create tension among specific health care standards or guidelines, quality assessments, and person-centered health care. It's not clear how these tensions will be expressed in a value-based health care reimbursement model.

Clinical Significance

It's vital that an acceptable and accepted definition and understanding of person-centered care guide the provision of health care in which the emphasis is on value-based health outcomes. Without common definitions of the important concepts guiding health care, it can be impossible to develop person-centered care models for dentistry or to integrate oral health care within the overall health and primary care model of care delivery.

Glick M: Precision-, patient-, and person-centered care, oh my. *J Am Dent Assoc* 150:161-162, 2019

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