Patient Activation Measure

A health intervention outcome measure by Michael Quaye

What is patient activation?

Patient activation describes the knowledge, skills, and confidence a person has in managing their health and healthcare (Cuevas et al.2021). The Patient Activation measure (PAM) has become the most used measure of 'patient activation'. It captures a patient's beliefs about their ability to self-manage and the likelihood that they would act on those beliefs (Hibbard,2016; Newlands et al. 2021).

The PAM measures self-management ability and is particularly relevant for people with long-term health conditions (Roberts et al.2016).

Method of Use

❑ Patient completes a PAM questionnaire comprising 10-13 declarative statements they could make about their health
❑ The response from the questionnaire is scored on a 0- 100-point scale
❑ The scale is matched to one of four 'levels of activation' (Hibbard,2016).
❑ Each level of activation indicates a range of health-related characteristics, including behaviour outcome
❑ The results from PAM is combined with other care and support to design a personalised intervention to encourage patient self-care

Level 1
Disengaged and overwhelmed

Individuals are passive and lack confidence. Knowledge is low, goal-orientation is weak, and adherence is poor. Their perspective: "My doctor is in charge of my health."

Level 2
Becoming aware, but still struggling

Individuals have some knowledge, but large gaps remain. They believe health is largely out of their control, but can set simple goals. Their perspective: "I could be doing more."

Level 3
Taking action

Individuals have the key facts and are building self-management skills. They strive for best practice behaviors, and are goal-oriented. Their perspective: "I'm part of my health care team."

Level 4
Maintaining behaviors and pushing further

Individuals have adopted new behaviors, but may struggle in times of stress or change. Maintaining a healthy lifestyle is a key focus. Their perspective: "I'm my own advocate."

Increasing Levels of Activation

Strengths

❑ Can be administered quickly- 3-5mins
❑ Can be used to tailor intervention for individual needs (Kearns et al.2020)
❑ Helps to predict the likelihood of a patient's health-related behaviour and outcome
❑ Can be used with other interventions to support the patient's self-care (Kearns et al.2020; Lightfoot et al.2022)
❑ Recommended by the NHS and is central to achieving person-centred care (Roberts et al.2016)

Limitations

❑ Requires licence to use
❑ Requires staff to be highly skilled to implement
❑ Little evidence of the meaningfulness of the score in relation to acute self-management, behaviour and action
❑ Difficult to implement in patients with low literacy levels and comprehension.
❑ little guidance on how to use the score to tailor appropriate care (Downie et al.2022)

Psychometric Properties

Reliability- Good intra-rater and inter-rater reliability and been proven across different demographic and health status groups (Rademakers et al.2016; Eyles et al. 2020; Roberts et al.2016).

Validity: High criterion and construct validity when compared to the Health literacy questionnaire using the key criterion of self-described health behaviour (Skolasky et al.2011; Rademakers et al.2016)

Use at Leicester Diabetes Centre

PAM is used as part of a comprehensive assessment during clinical trials to assess patients' knowledge, skills and confidence in managing their health in order to evaluate the efficacy of an intervention.

Conclusion

The PAM is a reliable and valid outcome measure that helps to tailor and design interventions to meet individual needs. Changes in activation levels can help demonstrate timely evidence of the effectiveness of a particular intervention. The PAM can also be used with health coaching to support self-management within physiotherapy practice (Patten et al.2022)

References
Cuevas, H., Heitkemper, E., Huang, Y., Jang, D.E., García, A.A. and Zuñiga, J.A. (2021) 'A systematic review and meta-analysis of patient activation in people living with chronic conditions', *Patient Education and Counseling,* 104(9), pp. 2200-2212.
Downie, S., Shnaigat, M. and Hosseinzadeh, H. (2022) 'Effectiveness of health literacy- and patient activation-targeted interventions on chronic disease self-management outcomes in outpatient settings: A systematic review', *Australian Journal of Primary Health,* 28(2), pp. 83-96.
Eyles, J.P., Ferreira, M., Mills, K., Lucas, B.R., Robbins, S.R., Williams, M., Lee, H., Appleton, S. and Hunter, D.J. (2020) 'Is the patient activation measure a valid measure of osteoarthritis self-management attitudes and capabilities? results of a Rasch analysis', *Health and Quality of Life Outcomes,* 18(1), p. 121.
Hibbard, J.H. (2016) 'Patient activation and the use of information to support informed health decisions', *Patient Education and Counseling,* 100(1), pp. 5-7.
Kearns, R., Harris-Roxas, B., McDonald, J., Song, H.J., Dennis, S. and Harris, M. (2020) 'Implementing the patient activation measure (PAM) in clinical settings for patients with chronic conditions: A scoping review', *Integrated Healthcare Journal,* 2(1), p. e000032.
Lightfoot, C.J., Nair, D., Bennett, P.N., Smith, A.C., Griffin, A.D., Warren, M. and Wilkinson, T.J. (2022) 'Patient activation: The cornerstone of effective self-management in chronic kidney disease?', *Kidney and Dialysis,* 2(1), pp. 91-105.
Newland, P., Lorenz, R. and Oliver, B.J. (2021) *Patient activation in adults with chronic conditions: A systematic review,* London, England: SAGE Publications.
Patten, H., Stewart, C., Horler, C., Hemmings, S. and Daluiso, G. (2022) 'Using health coaching and the patient activation measure® to support self-management within musculoskeletal outpatients: A service improvement project', *Physiotherapy,* 114, pp. e160-e161.
Rademakers, J., Maindal, H.T., Steinsbekk, A., Gensichen, J., Brenk-Franz, K. and Heniks, M. (2016) 'Patient activation in Europe: An international comparison of psychometric properties and patients' scores on the short form patient activation measure (PAM-13)', *BMC Health Services Research,* 16(1), pp. 570.
Roberts, N.J., Kidd, L., Dougall, N., Patel, I.S., McNarry, S. and Nixon, C. (2016) 'Measuring patient activation: The utility of the patient activation measure within a UK context—Results from four exemplar studies and potential future applications', *Patient Education and Counseling,* 99(10), pp. 1739-1746.
Skolasky, R.L., Green, A.F., Scharfstein, D., Boult, C., Reider, L. and Wegener, S.T. (2011) 'Psychometric properties of the patient activation measure among multimorbid older adults', *Health Services Research,* 46(2), pp. 457-478.