What if I told you that one of the most powerful tools for making polypharmacy safer is not a new drug, a genetic test, or a high-tech app? It is you! Your voice, your experience, and your active participation in the decisions about your own treatment.

SAFEPOLYMED

SafePolyMed.eu

Improving Safety in Polymedication by Managing Drug-Drug-Gene Interactions

Safety in Polypharmacy training 2026

Session 1 – Video 2/2

Basics on polypharmacy and patient involvement

Your Voice Matters: Patient Involvement in Polypharmacy Safety

Rachel Giles, Eglys Gonzalez, Olga Millán

LeukaNET Leukemia Advocates Network

Patvocates PATIENT ENGAGEMENT IS IN OUR DNA

Funded by the European Union

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Why Patient Involvement Matters

Good communication between patients and healthcare providers leads to fewer errors and better treatment outcomes.

Bring lived expertise



Symptoms, pain, daily burdens & preferences

Support accurate diagnosis



Your information helps evaluation & outcomes

Shared decision-making



Agree on treatment plans and acceptable risks/benefits

Proper administration



Food interactions, timing, dosing details

Identify adverse events



Notice, write down & report unusual effects

Keep medication records



Document what you take, when, and any reactions

Patient safety curriculum guide: multi-professional edition https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241501958

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Shared Decision-Making: Two-Way Communication

Well-informed patients are shared decision-makers. Healthcare providers must actively support this role.

PATIENTS should:

- Read medication leaflets & check drug interactions
- Disclose ALL medications (including OTC & herbal)
- Share side effects — even minor ones

TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION

PROVIDERS should:

- Actively enable patient participation in decisions
- Provide tools in local languages
- Support health literacy & cultural sensitivity

💡 **Health literacy** = not just more information, but confidence to act on it + community support + cultural awareness.

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Patient Involvement: Key Actions



Build self-agency

Know your medications and actively manage your own treatment



Use local-language tools

Tracking tools and apps in your own language help bridge communication gaps



Promote health literacy

Develop confidence to act on health knowledge, not just receive information



Effective health communication

Engage in clinical, social, and community settings to improve outcomes

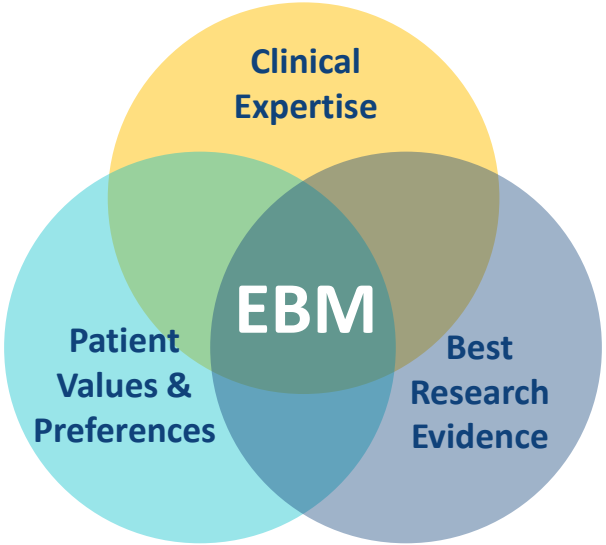


Address social determinants

Education, income, culture & language all affect how you engage with care

Evidence-Based Medicine (EBM)

EBM systematically uses clinical research to deliver the best care to each patient.



EBM brings together:

Best available research
Systematic reviews, clinical trials, guidelines

Clinical expertise
Healthcare professional judgment & experience

Patient preferences
Your values, goals, and priorities for treatment

EBM provides a roadmap for clinicians to apply valid scientific evidence, tailored to the patient.

EBM: The 5-Step Model



Iterative process: After Step 5, the cycle continues, constantly refining treatment based on outcomes and patient feedback.

https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK470182/
https://www.csp.org.uk/professional-clinical/clinical-evidence/evidence-based-practice/what-it

How EBM Benefits You as a Patient

More informed decisions

Understand your disease management and treatment options clearly

Accurate perception of risk

Know the real likelihood of benefits and side effects

Appropriate use of procedures

Avoid unnecessary tests or interventions with low benefit

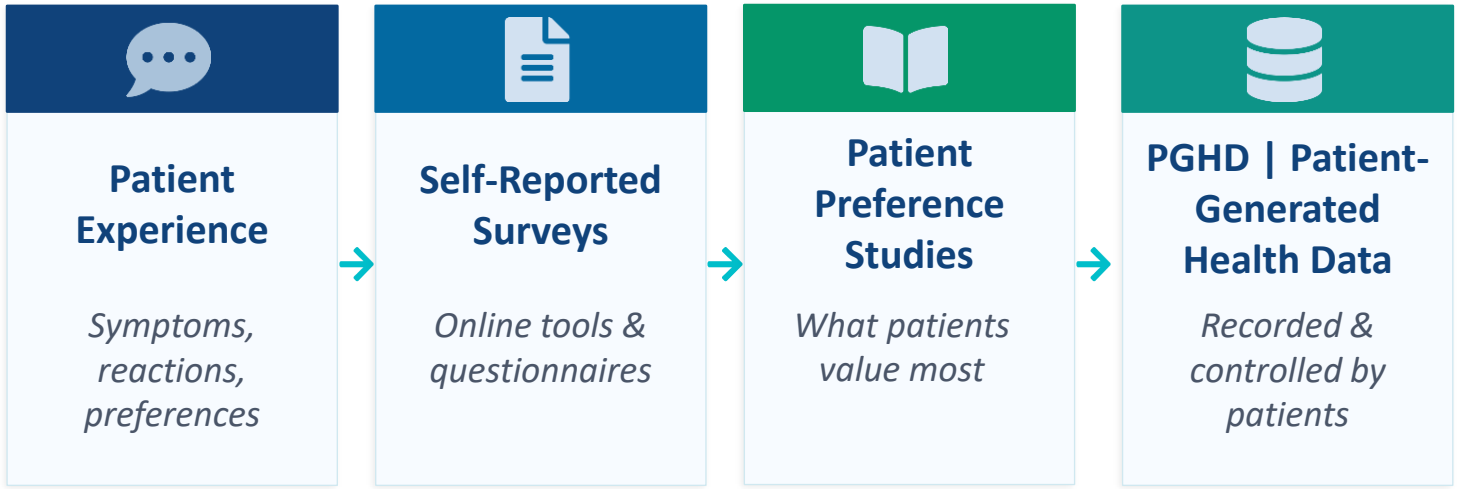
Meaningful shared decisions

Your values and preferences shape the final treatment choice

Evidence-based medicine — EUPATI Toolbox
Keyes D, Varacallo MA. Evidence-Based Medicine. [Updated 2026 Jul 5]. In: StatPearls [Internet]. Treasure Island (FL): StatPearls Publishing; 2026 Jan-. Available from: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sites/books/NBK470182/

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Your Experience Is Evidence



Patient-led evidence generation puts patients in the driver's seat

📋 **Real example:** For an ambiguous cancer treatment (helping only 5–7% of patients), patient organisations were surveyed directly, and their preferences shaped the final clinical guidelines.

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Before Your Next Appointment…

1. **Prepare a COMPLETE medication list**
   (prescriptions, OTC, supplements, herbal)

2. **Note any side effects or reactions**
   (even minor or uncertain ones)

3. **Prepare ONE question about your treatment plan**
   (your question, your voice, your care)

Session 1 complete!

▶ Next: Session 2 — Drug–Drug Interactions: How drugs work in your body

Credits & Attributions

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AI disclosure

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