

Spotlight Series

Issue 002/2023

Working in Partnership - Doctors and Patients

Introduction

The Patient Safety Together Spotlight Series highlights different patient safety initiatives, examples of local shared learning or patient safety content that may impact the wider healthcare audience in Ireland.

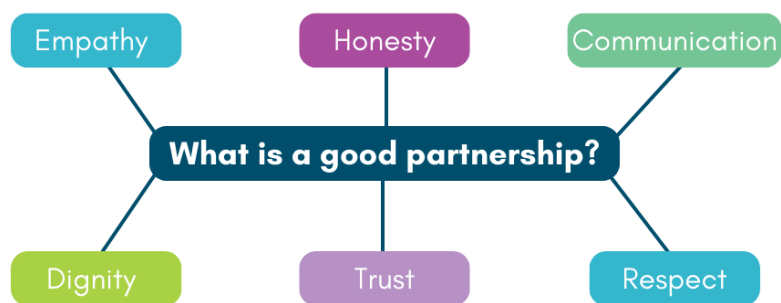
In this instalment we shine a spotlight on a recent blog post by the *Irish Medical Council*. The blog is titled *Working in Partnership – Doctors and Patients*

What the blog highlights

This blog discusses how when patients take on an active role in their own care and decisions about their treatment they can improve their healthcare experience. Doctors and healthcare workers have a responsibility to make healthcare as safe as possible, but patients also play an important role. Everyone needs to talk and listen to each other to make our healthcare as safe as possible. This blog contains some useful content to help improve patient healthcare by encouraging a *partnership* between doctors and patients.

What is a good partnership?

Partnerships are based on good communication, trust and mutual respect. Good communication is important for doctors to diagnose and treat patients effectively. To help doctors to do this, patients need to answer questions fully and honestly. This includes being as clear as possible when giving information about health, concerns or worries, and expectations.



What doctors need to know

Doctors will usually want to know a patient's full medical history, including medications, previous illnesses and conditions, and details of previous hospital admissions. The history will also include information about parents and family members, particularly if any conditions or illnesses are common in the family. If a doctor knows a patient's social circumstances and lifestyle, it can help them understand the patient's overall health better.



Doctors should explain clearly the diagnosis and treatment options, and advise patients on how to take any medications they have been prescribed. Patients should listen carefully and ask for extra information they need about their:



By working in partnership with their doctor and taking an active role in their care, listening and asking questions, patients can improve their healthcare experience.

What patients say

The Medical Council surveyed 1,010 patients in August 2023 to find out if working in partnership with their doctor was important to them in terms of their own healthcare experience. 80% of those surveyed strongly agreed it was important to them that they be treated as a partner in their own healthcare.

What does being a partner mean to patients?

clear explanation
empathy/caring/friendly
open communication
involved in decision making
taken seriously
and being listened to

How can I get further information?



You can access the full blog on the *Medical Council* Website at <https://www.medicalcouncil.ie/news-and-publications/news/blog/items/working-in-partnership-doctors-and-patients.html>



The Spotlight Series is available on the *Patient Safety Together* website www.hse.ie/pst

If you would like to discuss a potential Spotlight Series instalment please contact patientsafetytogether@hse.ie

