Abstract

Objective

The aim of the study was to explore the views of people aged over 70 years on involvement in their primary health care in 11 different European countries.

Methods

Older patients were asked about their views on patient involvement in a face-to-face interview. All interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed and analysed in accordance with the principles of "qualitative content analysis". An international code list was used.

Results

Four hundred and six primary care patients aged between 70 and 96 years were
interviewed. Their views could be categorized into four major groups: doctor–patient interaction, GP related topics, patient related issues and contextual factors.

Conclusion
People over 70 do want to be involved in their care but their definition of involvement is more focussed on the "caring relationship", "person-centred approach" and "receiving information" than on "active participation in decision making".

Practice implications
The desire for involvement in decision making is highly heterogeneous so an individual approach for each patient in the ageing population is needed. Future research and medical education should focus on methods and training to elicit older patients' preferences.

The similar views in 11 countries suggest that methods for enhancing patient involvement in older people could be internationally developed and exchanged.

Keywords
Patient participation; Involvement; Elders/elderly; Primary care; Qualitative research; Europe

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