

# Shorter hospital stay with person-centered healthcare

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Healthcare that implements a person-centred approach not only make care more efficient, but also yields more satisfied patients. A study carried out at the Sahlgrenska Academy at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden, shows that if there is an active partnership between the patient and healthcare professionals, the patient's hospital stay can be reduced by one-third.

Person-centred care takes its starting point in the patient's own experience of the treatment, and it begins with a healthcare plan based on the patient's individual condition and limitations. This includes a [partnership](#) between the patient and the healthcare professional: the first is an expert in living with the illness and the latter is an expert in the illness itself. The patient's social network is also involved in this process.

## Unique comparative study

Aiming at taking the lead in research and implementation is the Centre for Person-Centred Care (GPCC) at the Sahlgrenska Academy and the University of Gothenburg. GPCC researchers have conducted a unique comparative study with 123 [patients](#) who were treated according to the person-centred care principle. The purpose of the study was to evaluate if person-centred care can shorten patients' [hospital stay](#), if it improves their daily [functional capacity](#) and quality of life and if it reduces their re-admission rate.

## Hospital stay shortened by one-third

The results show that the hospital stay for patients who undergo person-centred care is reduced by 2.5 days. 'The hospital stay was reduced by 30 percent compared to patients who underwent traditional care,' says Inger Ekman, professor at the Sahlgrenska Academy and the centre's Director.

## Improved daily capacity

Despite the shorter hospital stay, the patients in the person-centred groups showed no improvement in [quality of life](#) or readmission rate. However, there was a significantly improved daily functional capacity. Yet the study also points to difficulties in changing the perspective of health care. 'Our study shows that person-centred care leads to effective and high-quality [health](#) care. However, only 60 percent of the patients in our study actually did receive consistent person-centred care during their entire stay,' says Ekman. 'It shows the difficulty of rearranging the healthcare culture since it is based on a person with an illness and not on the person's illness alone. The biggest challenge will be to break the traditional and rigid structure of healthcare.'

## Planned further studies

The study, published in the respected *European Heart Journal*, is one of the largest controlled studies ever to evaluate the effect of wards on patients with degenerative chronic heart failure. Inger Ekman hopes that the study will be the first step towards a change where evidence-based care will be combined with the patients' experiences and knowledge of their condition. Gothenburg's researchers are already preparing a new study on the effects of person-centred care on patients with acute coronary syndrome.

Provided by University of Gothenburg

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