

Decision making preferences among patients with heart attacks

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In a research letter, Harlan M. Krumholz, M.D., S.M., from Yale University School of Medicine and colleagues, "sought to investigate preferences for participation in the decision-making process among individuals hospitalized with an acute myocardial infarction ([AMI] or heart attack)." The researchers combined data from two similar AMI registries (TRIUMPH and PREMIER) which resulted in 6,636 patients in the study sample who were asked about who should make decisions on treatment options.

"More than two-thirds of patients with AMI indicated a preference to play an active role in the decision-making process, and of those, about a quarter preferred that the decision be theirs alone rather than shared with their physician," the authors found. "Our findings indicate that physicians who aspire to provide patient-centered care should assess patients' decision-making preferences by directly asking each patient."

"Our challenge now is to develop systems that fully respect these preferences and ensure that patients who prefer an active role are given that opportunity," the authors conclude.

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