

Patient choice at heart of new online decision aids

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A health website has launched a range of free online health decision aids, allowing patients to make more informed treatment choices, thanks to the work of a Newcastle University academic.

Patient.co.uk now provides a range of free online [health decision aids](#), which are designed to help patients make informed choices about their treatment options, alongside their GP or nurse.

The first set of this comprehensive collection, Brief Decision Aids, was produced by the MAGIC (Making Good Decisions In Collaboration) programme. MAGIC focuses on implementing shared decision making in practice and is supported by the charity, the Health Foundation.

Now the range of decision aids available on Patient.co.uk has been extended to include Option Grids, also developed within the MAGIC programme, and Patient Decision Aids which are produced by the NHS. The decision aids on Patient.co.uk cover a broad range of medical topics including acne, contraceptive choices and [breast cancer](#).

Richard Thomson, Professor of Epidemiology and Public Health at Newcastle University who leads MAGIC in the North East said: "Brief Decision Aids help a patient and their doctor or nurse discuss the risks, benefits and consequences of treatment options. Together they can decide which option is the preferred one, taking full account of what is important for the individual patient."

Dr Hayley Willacy, Clinical Content Editor at Patient.co.uk says: "For many years 'doctor knew best' and we made decisions on our patient's behalf, with the knowledge we had of the person and their condition. The maxim has changed and now our patients expect 'no decision about me, without me'.

National inpatient surveys have shown around 50% of patients would like to have more knowledge of available [treatment options](#) and the potential consequences - particularly [adverse effects](#) - before they give their consent."

Dr Dave Tomson, editor of the Brief Decision Aids (BDAs), and a trainer in shared decision making, is confident that they help both doctors and [patients](#) reach better decisions. He said: "The overwhelming feedback from clinicians learning to improve their shared [decision making](#) skills is that Brief Decision Aids help them do a good job better." Newcastle University, in partnership with Patient.co.uk and EMIS, are now regularly adding to the growing list of decision aids on Patient.co.uk, which will be also be available on the EMISWeb system in the future.

Provided by Newcastle University

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