

Patients give high marks to shared medical appointments

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(HealthDay)—Shared medical appointments (SMAs) improve patient satisfaction with primary care, according to research published in the July/August issue of the *Annals of Family Medicine*.

Leonie Heyworth, M.D., M.P.H., of the Veterans Administration Boston Healthcare System in Jamaica Plain, Mass., and colleagues mailed questionnaires to SMA patients and usual care patients (921 in each group) to measure levels of patient satisfaction and other indicators.

The researchers found that 40 percent of SMA patients and 31 percent of usual care patients responded. After adjustment, SMA patients were found to be more likely to rate their overall satisfaction with care as "very good" than usual care patients (odds ratio, 1.26; 95 percent

confidence interval, 1.05 to 1.52). In the analysis of indicators for patient-centered medical home, SMA patients described their care as more accessible and more sensitive to their needs; usual care patients reported greater satisfaction with physician communication and time spent during the appointment.

"Additional research should examine satisfaction with SMAs over time and identify strategies to enhance patient-clinician communication within these appointments," the authors write.

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