

# Advanced care decision aids underutilized

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(HealthDay)—Decision aids are underutilized for advanced care planning and their effectiveness is not well documented, according to a review published online July 29 in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*.

Mary Butler, Ph.D., M.B.A., from the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, and colleagues conducted a literature search in order to detail characteristics of several decision aids that are available to guide adults in advance care planning, and to detail the need for new decision aids.

The researchers write that decision aids support the [advance care planning](#) process through aiding [patients](#) in learning about anticipated conditions and options for care; considering these options; and communicating preferences for future care. However, little is known about the effectiveness of decision aids that are intended to help patients. Widely available decision aids have not been assessed for

effectiveness, while published decision aids available in the empirical literature are not generally publicly available.

"Ultimately, decision aids can help patients to thoughtfully consider and document their preferences and assess important relationships," the authors write. "A well-considered and well-communicated preference helps physicians feel comfortable about the ethics of providing or withholding treatments that affect survival. Effective decision aids help provide closure to family and loved ones who will live with the consequences."

**More information:** [Abstract](#)  
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