I041 MEASURING ACTIVATION: AN EVALUATION OF THE PATIENT ACTIVATION MEASURE (PAM)

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The Patient Activation Measure (PAM) produces a score on a 100 point scale; assigning patients to one of four categories of activation (low to high). Interest in the concept and its measurement is growing as there is some research which indicates higher levels of activation are associated with positive health behaviours, better clinical outcomes, better patient experiences and lower healthcare costs, and it has been proposed that patients with higher activation are more likely to engage in preventative behaviours, adhere to treatment and more effectively self-manage. In our evaluation of the feasibility of using the PAM in the NHS we found that there was a lack of clarity about what a change in a PAM score meant, and what degree of change could be construed as significant. Although, there is some US research which suggests that a change of three points is associated positively with patient outcomes, this is by no means definitive and more understanding is needed of the meaning and implications of changes for patients and practitioners.

In addition, the instructions for using the PAM in practice state that the PAM should, ideally, be completed autonomously so that the patient’s responses are unbiased. Yet, we found that many individuals needed assistance to complete the PAM. This has implications for how inclusive the PAM can be. In conclusion, uncertainty remains about the extent to which the PAM can, and should be relied on, as a measure of activation.

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