

## Informed Patient Decisions

An important part of providing appropriate clinical care to patients is ensuring that all patients are fully informed, allowing them to make decisions about their health care. GPs will explain the purpose, importance, benefits and risks of proposed investigations, referrals and treatments.

It is crucial that this information is clearly explained using easily understood language. This is particularly important where sensitive issues and investigations are involved. The GP may choose to use diagrams or written information when appropriate to assist the patient to make an informed decision.

It is important to create an understanding of shared responsibility between the patient and the practice. It is also appropriate for patients to be fully informed about prescribed medications and medicine safety. This may be achieved by referring patients to the large range of information and leaflets about medicines available online.

### **RACGP 4<sup>th</sup> Edition Standards**

- 1.2.2** *Our practice gives patients sufficient information about the purpose, importance, benefits and risks and possible costs associated with proposed investigations, referrals or treatments, to enable patients to make informed decisions about their health.*

### **Assessment methods**

- Interviews with GPs and clinical staff

Surveyors will ask GPs to explain how they inform their patients about the benefits, risks and possible costs of proposed treatments, tests or investigations. GPs will be able to describe how they use leaflets, brochures or written information to support their explanation of the diagnosis and proposed management, and information about medicines and medicine safety.

### **Meeting the Standards**

It is crucial that this information is clearly explained using easy to understand language. This is particularly important where sensitive issues and investigations are involved. The GP may choose to use diagrams or written information to assist the patient to make an informed decision when appropriate.

It is ultimately the patient's decision to follow the advice of the GP after receiving sufficient information to make an informed decision about their health care. Should a patient choose to disregard the GP's recommendations, such refusal should be documented in the patient health record.

The GPs should also be able to describe how they provide information about medicines or medicine safety to patients.