Decision Making

"No problem can withstand the assault of sustained thinking."
Voltaire

This document has been curated by Fellows of the RACP to help you find high quality CPD resources on decision making.

Resources are categorised by type:

1. Key organisations & websites
2. Webcasts
3. Courses
4. Tools
5. Key journals
6. Recommended reading

Professional Development in Decision Making

A physician must generate alternative possibilities or courses of actions to solve a problem, assessing the hazards and weighing up the threats and benefits of potential options.

Decision making can be interpreted as 1) having a focus on patient centred care and consumer engagement in treatment choices and 2) the doctors’ cognitive process when making a diagnosis. Please note that this Decision Making curated collection consists of resources relevant to both contexts.

Important behaviours include:

- Recognising and articulating problems to be addressed
- Initiating balanced discussion of options, pros and cons with relevant team members
- Carefully considering contraindications, potential interactions and complications of therapeutic options
- Respecting the patient’s right to self-determination

For further information on patterns of behaviour and behaviour markers in the area of decision making please refer to the SPPP Guide.

SEND US YOUR FEEDBACK:

RACP curated collections are managed by the Learning Support Unit, based on the contributions and peer review of Fellows of the College and other experts.

We thank Dr Simon Allan, Dr David Gillis and A/Prof Mark Kotowicz for their contributions to the Decision Making page.

Tell us what you think about this page and make suggestions for improvement by emailing myresources@racp.edu.au.
Key organisations & websites

Useful as a starting point and overview of current work in this area

CPD TIP: Keep notes on your activities on these sites to claim CPD points in Category 6 (1 credit/hr)

Capacity Australia
This is a not-for-profit charity based in Sydney made up of experts from the medical, legal, ageing and disability fields. The website reflects the expertise of the group and the resources page is particularly useful.

Society for Medical Decision Making
SMDM is an international group that strongly supports shared, informed decision making between patients and providers. This site provides access to relevant research in this area and is also useful for patients.

Australian Commission on safety and Quality in Health Care
The Australian Commission on safety and Quality in Health Care set up this comprehensive page which provides various resources relevant to medical decision making.

Human Diagnosis Project
The Human Diagnosis Project is a worldwide effort to create a single open system that maps any human health problem to its possible diagnoses map. This creative initiative is designed to enhance clinical reasoning.

Society to Improve Diagnosis in Medicine
This comprehensive website provides various community resources – including conference dates and latest news – to educate and inform medical practitioners about improving patient safety and healthcare delivery.

Webcasts

Useful for brief overviews of topics and recent developments

CPD TIP: Keep notes on the activities you watch to claim CPD points in Category 6 (1 credit/hr)

Gerd Gigerenzer - Medical Decision Making
Dr Gigerenzer, the Director of the Centre for Adaptive Behaviour and Cognition, describes how heuristics can improve decision making over much more complex solutions.

ACSQHC: Video Presentations by Professor Dawn Stacey
Professor Stacey engages the audience with questions and slides on shared decision making, including how and when to use patient decision making aids.

When Experts Disagree: The Art of Decision Making
A panel presentation with experts from Harvard Medical School that breaks down the decision making process. This is peppered with relevant analogies that set the scene for physicians and how this approach can be applied.

How Young Doctors Think: Teaching Clinical Decision Making
This presentation delves into the role of decision making in diagnosing and clinical problem solving. The presenter also discusses the best practice approach for medical educators and how to navigate the decision making process.

Short on time? Try this:
- Read a guide to informed decision-making by Queensland Health
- Watch Gerd Gigerenzer discuss medical decision making
- Read a breakdown on what consent and decision making actually means and achieves
COURSES
Useful for in depth, structured learning

CPD TIP: Keep certificates and notes from courses to claim CPD points in Category 4 (3 credits/hr)

Mastering Shared Decision Making
This course ran by the Cognitive Institute encourages participants to reflect on their current attitudes and practises. It addresses how doctors and patients arrive at a decision and what constitutes a ‘good’ healthcare decision.

Finding and Appraising the Evidence
These six modules take you through the process of finding evidence and how to assess the validity and reliability of published research in order to provide effective and efficient healthcare.

Clinical Practice Improvement Training Program
This program from the Clinical Excellence Commission is designed to train physicians to undertake a comprehensive diagnostic of the causes of process failures.

TOOLS
Useful for implementing what you have learned in your daily practice

CPD TIP: Keep documentation from audits to claim CPD points in Category 5 (3 credits/hr)

Implementation Toolkit
This toolkit underlines five relevant steps for implementing patient decision aids and decision support in health services. The steps are presented using a systems perspective and links to resources are provided for each stage.

Shared Decision-Making (SDM) Toolkit: Train-the-Trainer Tools for Teaching SDM in the Classroom and Clinic
This toolkit is designed for use by attending physicians to teach residents, fellows, medical students and other health care providers and staff on how to effectively apply core elements of shared decision-making (SDM).

Tools and Training for Shared Decision Making
From this site, you can download “decision worksheets” that are designed to be used during visits; it helps providers and patients work through options, key benefits and harms, and come up with a plan for management.

Introduction to Shared Decision Making and Patient Decision Aids
This introduction to shared decision making presentation provides an easy to understand and comprehensive, big picture guide to various aspects relevant to the process.

KEY JOURNALS
Useful for keeping up to date with research and finding out more on specific topics

CPD TIP: Keep notes on what you read to claim CPD points in Category 6 (1 credit/hr)

Medical Decision Making
MDM publishes articles that offer rigorous and systematic approaches to decision making. The journal is designed to improve the health and clinical care, and to assist with health policy development.

BMC Medical Informatics and Decision Making
BMC Medical Informatics and Decision Making publishes research articles in all aspects of medical informatics and medical decision making.
Consent and shared decision-making
Dr Mark Dinwoodie, MPS (Medical Protection Society) Head of Member Education clearly explains what shared decision making is all about, its importance and the benefits for patients as well as physicians.

This article provides a detailed look into what cognitive bias is and how it adversely affects diagnosing. It highlights the importance of critical thinking and provides a few strategies to becoming more alert to the influences of bias.

This peer-reviewed article discusses shared decision-making (in the Australian context) as part of the consultation process where a clinician and patient jointly participate in making a health decision.

This textbook addresses the needs of all decision makers in the health-care arena and plots a clear course through some complex and conflicting variables that are affects the process.

International Patient Decision Aid Standards (IPDAS)
Resources put together by IPDAS covering a range of subjects that affects the decision making process.

This popular reference facilitates diagnostic and therapeutic decision making for a wide range of common and often complex problems faced in outpatient and inpatient medicine.

Politi, M. C. et al. (2013). Importance of clarifying patients’ desired role in shared decision making to match their level of engagement with their preferences. BMJ 2013;347:f7066
An articling outlining advice on how to determine how much patients want to be involved in the decision making process.

This book offers a scholarly and practical examination of how physicians decide the diagnosis and treatment of patients. Written for physicians, medical students and psychologists, it provides a framework for studying medical decision making behaviour.