

“Individual health systems may have different policies, but the core principles are always the same”

While healthcare systems and the policies that govern them vary from location to location, a universal and pivotal similarity exists across Europe. No matter how different the core policies underpinning an individual health system may be, healthcare is a service for patients that works best when it is structured around the needs of the people it sets out to serve – patients. These needs may vary from location to location, but the core principles are always the same. There is no one size fits all approach to healthcare, you have to deliver the best possible care for the individual, which means tailoring any treatment programme around their unique needs and preferences.

This is not only something that at **Picker Institute Europe** we acknowledge, but it is embedded in the fabric, and lies at the heart, of our charitable mission, to improve health and social care quality for all.

As we continue to grow both in reach and impact, so too do our organisational objectives – aiming to affect change and sustainable improvement not just in the health and social care jurisdictions where we have already worked for many years, but more widely. Not only is there an opportunity to transfer learnings from the UK and Germany and make a difference to other healthcare systems, but there is equally much to be learnt from the ground breaking, insightful, research being conducted in the patient experience in other countries.

However, for this knowledge transfer across healthcare systems to be converted into sustainable improvements in care quality and service delivery, a more strategic and cohesive approach to person centred and experience in Europe is required. Keen to drive a wider discussion around this subject, with key researchers and opinion formers from across the continent, last summer saw us host an **International Patient Experience Research Seminar**. Bringing together representatives from Spain, The Netherlands, England, Wales and Germany, for a two day event.

One of the main themes to emerge from the discussion was that not only is person centred care a necessity for any successful, high quality health care system, and a subject of universal interest, but it's an area where there are distinct inconsistencies and differences of approach from which we can learn.

One of the prerequisites identified as necessary to deliver service improvement is more clarity on the research agenda. Following the seminar, the Picker Institute will take forward and share the learnings gained, with the objective of building on them in the future with further meetings around implementation, and ultimately forging concrete partnerships that will allow the research to be translated into practice.

As exemplified in the Picker Principles of Care, there are lots of different aspects to person centred care that encompass any individual patient experience. During the course of the seminar many of these were highlighted as problematic, with improvements needed in areas including empowerment, shared decision making, family involvement and information provision.

During the course of the seminar we discussed how this research agenda could best be shaped to support the translation of aspirations in each of these areas of person centred care into reality – potentially across Europe. The report we are publishing today highlights those discussions and forms a starting point for future relationships, which, over the coming months and years will lead to research partnerships as we share knowledge and work with each other, patients, managers, researchers and clinicians alike to improve care.

I am both very excited about the implications of this project, and motivated by the commitment to the cause exemplified at this event. Person centred care is not just a concept that needs to be understood better by clinicians, but it needs to be delivered in a way that is efficient and crucially, that benefits the patient or user it sets out to serve. The best way to achieve this is to align any health service direction both in policy and in practice. When the two are interwoven they become unstoppable, more cost effective, and even better, the system actually works. The person being treated takes control of their care and becomes motivated to be concordant, use health care services in a sophisticated way, and to be a partner in their own recovery.