

## Value Gaps Between Patients and Doctors

**Authors :** Yih-Jer Wu, Ling-Lang Huang

**Abstract :** Shared decision-making (SDM) is a critical aspect of determining optimal medical strategies. However, current patient decision aids (PDAs) often prioritize evidence-based discussions over value-based considerations. Despite its significance, there is limited research addressing the 'value gap' between patients and healthcare providers. To address this gap, we developed the 'Patient-Doctor Relationship Questionnaire,' consisting of 12 questions. To explore potential variations in the patient-doctor value gap across different medical specialties, we conducted interviews with physicians, surgeons, and their respective patients, utilizing the questionnaire. Between 2020 and 2022, we interviewed a total of 144 patients and 19 doctors. Among the 12 questions, physicians demonstrated significant patient-doctor value gaps in 5 questions, while surgeons in 3 questions. Only one question turned out significant gaps in both physicians and surgeons. When asking both doctors and their patients to choose one from the following 6 answers (1. No issue significant; 2. Not knowing how to make a medical decision; 3. Not confident in the doctor's clinical judgment; 4. Not knowing how to articulate one's own condition; 5. Unable to afford medical expenses; 6. Not understanding what doctors explain) in response to the question "what the most significant issue is in the medical consultation", over 50% of doctors chose "Not knowing how to make a medical decision" (physicians vs. patients, 50% vs. 11%,  $p=0.046$ ; surgeon vs. patients, 83% vs. 29%,  $p=0.001$ ), while significantly more patients chose "No issue significant" (10% vs. 52%,  $p=0.002$ ; 0% vs. 33%,  $p<0.001$ , respectively). Our findings indicate that value gaps do exist between patients and doctors and that most patients in Taiwan "fully trust" their doctors' recommendations for medical decisions. However, when treatment outcomes are far from ideal, this overinflated "trust" may turn into frustration, which could become the catalyst for medical disputes. Doctors should spend more time having more effective communication with their patients, particularly regarding potentially dissatisfactory treatment outcomes. This study underscores the substantial variability in the patient-doctor value gap, often overlooked in SDM. Patients from different clinical backgrounds may hold values distinct from those of their healthcare providers. Bridging this value gap is imperative for achieving genuine and effective SDM.

**Keywords :** share-decision making, value gaps, communication, doctor-patient relationship

**Conference Title :** ICCH 2024 : International Conference on Communication in Healthcare

**Conference Location :** Paris, France

**Conference Dates :** November 18-19, 2024