

Patient involvement in healthcare professional practice – a question about knowledge

The concept of patient involvement is ambiguous and contested in the healthcare systems in Western Europe and North America. Current research indicates that patients only feel moderately involved in their treatment and care. This article builds on a study of chronically ill patients' perspectives on healthcare practice in Greenland. It discusses the significance of including in healthcare practice knowledge of patients' everyday lives with illness and their own views on their situations. Research was qualitative and ethnographic. Participants were followed with participant observations and qualitative interviews for 2.5 years during hospital stay in the capital Nuuk and in their homes in towns and settlements during 2010–2013. Results show that patients are concerned about how to manage their life with illness on a daily basis. Their everyday life activities demonstrate the resources they have to live with illness. However, procedures for healthcare practice concentrate on treatment of the physical disease. Knowledge about psychosocial needs for care and rehabilitation tend to be excluded. The study points to potential for improving professional practice through healthcare professionals' active investigation of patients' everyday lives and values, integration of this knowledge into their professional practice and developing structures for this kind of involvement.

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