

# PATIENT EDUCATION IN OSTEOARTHRITIS – GOOD PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM AN INTERNATIONAL PATIENT PANEL

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## Background

Osteoarthritis (OA) is the most common form of arthritis in adults<sup>1</sup>. Symptoms of OA include pain, swelling, stiffness and trouble moving the affected joint. OA can affect any joint but is most common in the knees, hips, spine and small joints in the hands<sup>2</sup>. With ageing populations and increasing rates of obesity and injury, the prevalence of osteoarthritis is expected to continue to increase globally. Being diagnosed early and following a treatment plan is the best way to slow the disease and optimize function<sup>2</sup>. Supported self-management and in some cases self-care are important ways of managing osteoarthritis. Education can help people learn to manage the physical and mental effects of osteoarthritis<sup>2</sup>.

## Objectives

An international panel of patient representatives from Europe and the US evaluated the current status of patient education in OA and considered a number of recommendations for future educational initiatives and materials for people living with this condition.

## Methods

- 12 patient representatives from Europe (10) and US (2) were invited for a virtual workshop in November 2023 to determine the ideal standard for OA patient education.
- More than 60 educational initiatives and materials for people living with OA were collected and reviewed online by the group.
- A sample of 10 materials and websites were used as examples for further evaluation during the workshop.
- The patient experts defined in two parallel groups the perceived gaps as well as appropriate formats and optimal channels for OA education and its dissemination.
- The outcomes of the discussion were consolidated and recommendations were formulated.

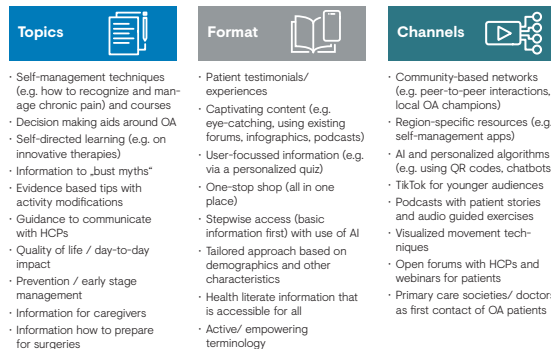
## Results

- Regarding the content of OA patient education there were several gaps identified.
- Panelists provided insights that highlighted for caregivers as examples of best practice. Patient information should be **tailored to different patient groups** (e.g., maintaining work productivity for younger people) as well as disease information for caregivers.
- **Artificial intelligence (AI) can help to personalize information** based on user profiles to provide access to information that best supports patient's specific needs.
- Community-based networks could be used more routinely to provide **accessible**

**patient education** via peer-to-peer groups, particularly in respect to psychological/mental health support aimed at reducing the stigma of pain.

- **Partnering with primary care medical societies** is essential to raise awareness and share educational tools as OA patients usually visit a primary care health professional with the first symptoms.
- Information on how to **prepare for surgery** and best manage post-surgical pain after joint replacement, recovery and rehabilitation expectations and timelines were recommended.
- The panel's recommendations regarding these topics, format and communication channels for future OA patient education are summarized in Figure 1.
- Some example materials are shown on this poster. The full list of collected materials can be found via the QR code below.

Figure 1: Recommendations for future OA patient education



The poster and related patient education materials in OA can be downloaded by using this QR code.



## Examples of existing materials of OA patient educational materials

**EULAR Recommendations in lay language:**  
<https://ard.bmj.com/content/early/2024/01/11/ard-2023-225041>



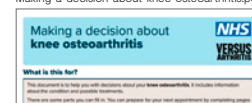
**OA Patient Materials:**  
<https://www.oafoundation.com/guides-material-didactic/>



**Arthritis Foundation OA Patient Education:**  
<https://www.arthritis.org/diseases/osteoarthritis>



**Versus Arthritis decision aids:** <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Making-a-decision-about-knee-osteoarthritis.pdf>



## Conclusion

The international patient panel proposes practical recommendations for clear & customized information, accessible resources, support for navigating the information maze (e.g. signposting by healthcare professionals) and using AI supported engagement across multimedia channels. Content that is inclusive and addresses multifaceted care should be a priority. Information or tools to empower patients to holistically self-manage care and guidance for structured decision-making were additional aspects for consideration. Further work is needed to collect broader views and good examples of OA patient education from other patient groups and experts to support people living with OA to improve the quality of their lives.

## References

1. Sternmetz J, D. et al. (2023). Global, regional, and national burden of osteoarthritis, 1990–2020 and projections to 2050: A Systematic Analysis for the Global Burden of Disease Study 2023. The Lancet Rheumatology, 5(8), e508–e522
2. WHO OA Fact-sheet <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/osteoarthritis> last accessed 20 December 2023.

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