

# Delivering the PROMIS in healthcare: empowering patients

**ROCNEXT**



**Stephen Dewhurst, blogger** 1:31 p.m. EDT July 16, 2014



(Photo: Getty Images)

Patient self-reported health measures are going to be a big deal under health reform, and have enormous potential to empower patients to take control of their own health. Recently, I learned about a new survey tool called [PROMIS \(http://www.nihpromis.org/\)](http://www.nihpromis.org/) that is being used to assess adult and pediatric self-reported health.

Where PROMIS really shines is in its ability to capture information about all domains of health, not just a specific disease. That's a big deal when the majority of Medicare patients have two or more chronic diseases.

What PROMIS does is to collect information on physical health, mental health and social health - which is exactly what's needed. Patients with heart disease don't just have problems with their heart, they often suffer from depression, social isolation and reduced mobility. So to understand how they are doing requires a really comprehensive set of measures.

PROMIS is a clever computer based survey that spits out questions that patients can quickly and easily complete using iPads in the waiting room. It turns this information into quantitative data that provides a precise measure of health across multiple domains - and it is beginning to show a real promise in the clinic.

For example, a [recent study at UR \(http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/m/pubmed/24532421/\)](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/m/pubmed/24532421/) suggests that PROMIS can be used as a pre-surgical assessment in patients about to undergo anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) reconstructive surgery. Individuals with low pre-surgery PROMIS scores in physical health were more likely to have poor outcomes after surgery. This kind of insight can be used to make sure that these at-risk patients get the kind of post-surgical interventions (like physical therapy) that will help them reach full recovery more quickly following their surgery.

Looking to the future, the use of tools like PROMIS will give patients a stronger voice in their own care. They will be able to tell their health providers, in real-time, just exactly how they are doing - and thereby get the help they need more quickly. That's a win/win for both patients and providers.



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