

Patient involvement in CMAJ (Canadian Medical Association Journal) publications from 2018-2020:

A cross-sectional study

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Read CMAJ's Statement of Purpose for Patient Engagement here:



Background

- In 2020, CMAJ committed to increasing the inclusion of patient perspectives in its content.^{1,2}
- Despite increased support for involving patients in health care and research, limited information exists regarding patient inclusion in academic publications³ and medical editors remain divided about the appropriateness of patient authorship⁴
- Existing data on patient involvement in journals focuses on Research submissions, rather than all article types, and suggests that supporting patient involvement results in an increase in publications acknowledging patient contributions over time³.
- CMAJ created an evaluation plan to assess how successful its patient involvement strategy was over time and understand whose perspectives were included. The first step of this plan was to understand the extent of patient involvement in CMAJ publications prior to active intervention to support it.

Important Definitions ¹ :	
Patient	Individuals with personal experience of a health issue as well as their family, informal caregivers and friends.
Patient involvement	Meaningful and active collaboration with patients in any number of roles including governance; priority setting; conduct; authorship, knowledge generation, translation and dissemination; etc.

Objective

- Understand the extent to which patients were involved in CMAJ content between 2018-2020
- Establish a baseline upon which to evaluate CMAJ's future efforts to increase patient perspectives in the journal

Design

- Cross-sectional analysis examining CMAJ products published from January 1, 2018 – December 31, 2020
- Included:** Podcasts, Blogs, select article types (Editorials, Research, Guidelines, Clinical Reviews, Commentaries, Humanities, Analysis, Practice)
- Excluded:** Letters, News, Correction, Retraction
- One reviewer analyzed all published content to assess whether patients were involved
- Variables of interest included the type and year of publication, method of patient involvement, and any details provided about the identity of the patient author (Humanities Encounters only)

Patient involvement was defined as...	
Articles	Including patient authors, mentioning/acknowledging patient contributions in text, or articles profiling patients*
Podcasts	Including patient interviewees
Blogs	Including patient authors

*Articles could contain multiple modes of involvement

Results

- From 2018-2020, 97/973 (10.0%) articles, 18/175 podcasts (10.3%), and 28/323 (8.7%) blog posts had patient involvement (Table 1). Patient authorship was the most frequent mode of involvement (Fig 1). 79.2% (19/24) Encounters articles were written by healthcare professionals/researchers about their experiences as patients or family members (the only type of article for which authorship characteristics are known).
- The editorial team solicited submissions for journal supplements in 2018, 2019 and for the "Patient Portrait" series in 2020. When the supplements were excluded from analysis, 6.6% articles (62/933) included patient involvement (Table 1).
- 94.4% (17/18) of podcasts with patient interviewees spoke to patients involved in the original article.
- All 28/28 (100%) blog posts had authors who provided patient perspectives.

Figure 1: Type and frequency of patient involvement in published CMAJ articles from 2018-2020 (excluding supplements). Multiple types of involvement per article.

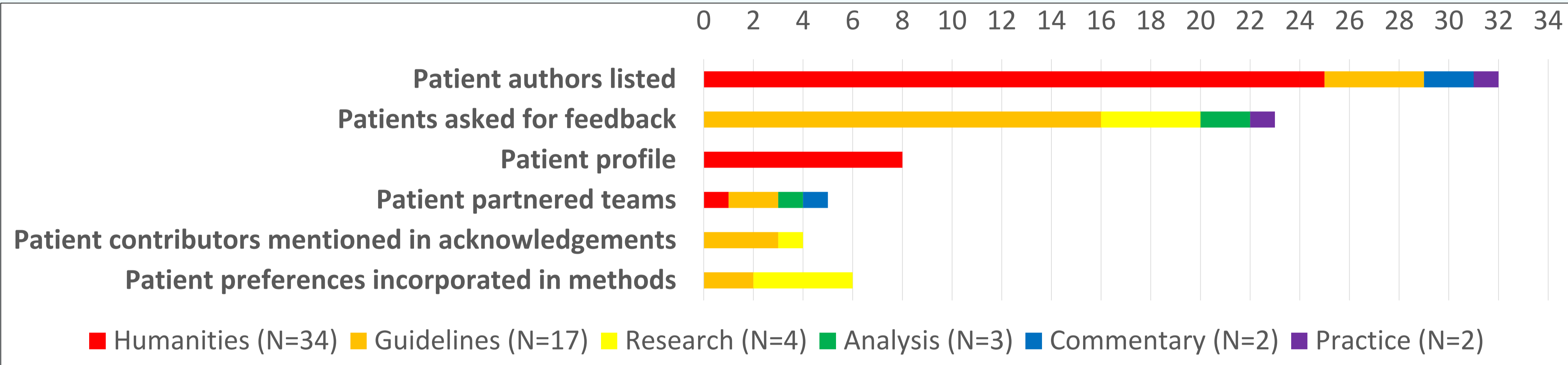


Table 1: Patient involvement in published articles by year and type of article. Data represented as « N published (N with patient involvement) » *Excludes articles published in special supplements on patient engagement. If these were included, there would be 173 (37) Commentaries (21.4%).

Year	Articles										Podcast	Blog
	Total	Editorial	Research	Analysis	Commentary	Guidelines	Review	Practice	Humanities			
2018	317 (15)	12 (0)	58 (2)	13 (1)	55 (1)	7 (5)	8 (0)	98 (0)	66 (6)	53 (5)	136 (10)	
2019	304 (15)	13 (0)	50 (0)	15 (1)	42 (0)	4 (3)	9 (0)	101 (0)	70 (11)	73 (8)	82 (8)	
2020	312 (32)	7 (0)	59 (2)	20 (1)	36 (1)	9 (9)	9 (0)	113 (2)	59 (17)	49 (5)	105 (10)	
Total	933 (62)	32 (0)	167 (4)	48 (3)	133 (2)*	20 (17)	26 (0)	312 (2)	195 (34)	175 (18)	323 (28)	
% Patient Involvement	6.6	0.0	2.4	6.3	1.5	85.0	0.0	0.6	17.4	10.3	8.7	

Discussion

- 10.3% podcasts, 8.7% blogs and 6.6% articles involved patients in some capacity between 2018-2020 when journal supplements were excluded.
- The Guidelines and Humanities sections had the highest and most consistent amount of patient involvement.
- It is encouraging to see this baseline of patient involvement in the journal before intervention. Future steps include encouraging and supporting submissions from people with different life experiences across Canada and increasing patient involvement across the journal.

References

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