



What it takes to develop a good therapeutic relationship between a patient and their psychiatrist

Patients and psychiatrists highlighted the importance of listening to each other and having enough time to discuss important issues. There was much agreement between patients and psychiatrists and what it takes to develop a good relationship. Psychiatrists considered it important to explain information clearly to patients and to develop relationships over time, especially if they were difficult to begin with. Patients emphasised the importance of trust and the many factors needed to establish a good relationship with a psychiatrist.

A study involving 18 'paired' psychiatrists and patients, revealed that:

- For patients being respectful, empathetic and non-judgmental were important qualities needed by psychiatrists.
- For psychiatrists adherence to treatment was important and that empathy, compassion, tact and adaptability were essential qualities for psychiatrists.
- Involving patients in decisions about treatment was the preferred approach by the majority of patients and psychiatrists who took part in the study.

This study was joint initiative between GAMIAN-EU and the European Psychiatric Association who are keen to strengthen their work together, starting with this exploration into how best to optimise the relationship between patients and psychiatrists.

"This project has been an important step in deepening the collaboration between GAMIAN-Europe and EPA. It is crucial that patients and psychiatrists work together to improve psychiatric care and this pilot project is a good base for further research". (Hilkka Karkkainen, President of GAMIAN-Europe)

"Getting to the correct diagnosis and finding the best strategy to fight against the disease require reciprocal trust, respectful communication from both the patient and the clinician, in order to get to an appropriate shared decision.

The European Psychiatric Association was therefore very happy to support the brilliant initiative of GAMIAN-Europe who wanted to analyse different visits and ask the patient to assess the quality of relationships with the clinician, and the clinician about the patient. GAMIAN-Europe and EPA strongly support this "team" approach to care. This project is a powerful example of how GAMIAN-Europe and EPA can join forces to promote optimal mental health care in Europe". (Philip Gorwood, President of European Psychiatric Association - EPA)

Our findings show interesting insights into what the patient and their psychiatrist consider important in building a trusting and therapeutic relationship; both being crucial for ensuring effective practice, treatment and care.

A full report of the study's findings can be found and [downloaded here](#).

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Name of Press Contact: Nigel Olisa
Email: executive.director@gamian.eu