

Most older adults prefer to participate in medical decisions

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Although most older Americans prefer to actively participate in making health care decisions, those with four or more chronic conditions are less likely to prefer active decision making.

Researchers analyzed a random sample of 2,017 [older adults](#) who, with sample weights, represented approximately 33 million Medicare beneficiaries aged 65 and older. They found that 85 percent of older Americans in a community setting preferred to actively participate in medical decision making, but approximately one in every seven older Americans preferred a passive role, leaving health care decisions to doctors (15 percent, n=4.9 million).

Approximately one-quarter of older adults with four or more [chronic conditions](#) preferred a passive role, which was more than twice the odds of those that did not have multiple conditions after controlling for socio-demographic characteristics. Older adults with multiple condition clusters were relatively less likely to prefer active decision making compared to those with none or a single condition cluster.

The authors encourage primary care clinicians to invite older adults with four or more conditions or multiple condition clusters to participate in [decision making](#) and to elicit goals and outcome preferences in those older adults who prefer less active participation.

More information: Winnie C. Chi et al. Multimorbidity and Decision-Making Preferences Among Older Adults, *The Annals of Family Medicine* (2017). [DOI: 10.1370/afm.2106](https://doi.org/10.1370/afm.2106)

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