



PATIENT DASHBOARDS

Guiding principles for developers

Empowering people with diabetes to manage their disease is a key point for the Belgian Diabetes Forum. To promote active involvement of people with diabetes, access to their health data is already possible today. However, this medical information is often perceived as incomprehensible.

In 2023, the BEDF investigated the perception of medical data access through an online survey involving 155 respondents. The key findings were illuminating: approximately **70% of respondents** check their **medical file multiple times per year**. Moreover, **65%** experience anxiety and worry due to information, perceived as unclear, in their medical file. **Presenting medical data** in a **comprehensible format** is thus a crucial step in the active and positive involvement of people with diabetes in their treatment.

One potential solution lies in the provision of a so-called 'dashboard': an accessible and visually understandable overview of treatment endpoints, their targets and current results.

Parameters such as **HbA1c** (indicating glucose control), **cholesterol levels**, **blood pressure** and **weight** can be presented visually, utilizing color codes like green/orange/red signifying optimal/acceptable/concerning values.

In the aforementioned survey, **90%** expressed a desire to consult a **visual patient dashboard** featuring color-coded indicators. This format fostered greater confidence and knowledge among participants, as the values interpreted from the dashboard were more accurately interpreted compared to traditional displays. A majority of **85%** supported granting **healthcare providers** other than their doctor **access** to the dashboard. The conclusion is that there is a great demand from people with diabetes to access their data in an **understandable** and **motivating way**.

As the development of such tools lies in the hands of public and private organisations, the BEDF would like to encourage all initiatives that lead to patient dashboards. This two pager wants to encourage these initiatives by suggesting **principles for dashboards** to be taken into account in order to increase the impact and relevance for such dashboards.



Basic principles for patient dashboard development



The dashboard parameters should be presented in an **easily understandable way** so that the person with diabetes can **intuitively understand** the data and deviations from the therapy goals. Use clear **color codes** for this purpose (e.g. in figure) rather than traditional parameter lists.



The dashboard should include the **most important parameters of diabetes care**, certainly **HbA1c, LDL cholesterol, systolic blood pressure, weight and smoking status**. These parameters should be able to be monitored over time. A brief explanation, understandable to non-medics, of why the parameters are set (or a reference to a good source for this) would be helpful.



The therapy goals should be **individually adaptable**, because in good medicine the goals should be determined together with the person with the condition, taking into account their general health, age and wishes.



As far as possible, ensure that the data can be **loaded automatically** from the **healthcare providers' software packages**.



Allow the person with diabetes to **add data themselves** or **load data from devices** such as glucometers, blood pressure monitors, pedometers, etc. Ideally, it should be possible to link devices without official medical approval as well (because the persons with diabetes also use them in real life), but the source of the data should be clear to healthcare providers.



Develop the dashboard in such a way that it can also be used for **other chronic conditions**, provided parameters are adjusted.

The endeavour should be to achieve as many of the above points as possible when creating a dashboard, but we realize that the ideal dashboard will have to be developed step by step.



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