



# Patients' Rights in Greek Reality

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- Greece, as a democratically governed country, could only incorporate the patients' rights into Greek law. Immediate wording of these rights took place in 1992.
- Prior to 1992, they were indirectly protected by the provisions of Constitutional Law, Civil, Criminal, Administrative and Disciplinary Regulations, which refer mainly to the obligations of doctors towards patients. Furthermore special regulations provide protection on issues such as organ transplantation, in vitro fertilization IVF, maternity - childhood protection, etc.
- The protection of patients' rights is a human right and originates primarily from the Greek Constitution.
- The progress of biomedical tools, awareness of human rights, the recent changes in the Greek Health System (ESY), the patient dependence on the system and the need to protect him, the development of bioethics, led our country to legally institute patients' rights (which, of course, happened in other democratic states). Moreover, we must not ignore the educational level of patients that tends to become more advanced, resulting in better information about their rights and greater demands on how they are provided with healthcare. Even more health articles and publications, biomedical journals, conferences, workshops, scientific societies, the role of universities and other health research and education institutions, media, patient associations, disabled people, international activities etc. increased the interest of stakeholders (citizens, politicians, patients, doctors), resulting in the legal institutionalization of patients' rights with Article 47 of Law 2071/92.
- It is not by accident Greece's last position in safeguarding patients' rights. Published research shows that 40% of patient associations are not involved in decision-making procession and 70% do not participate in hospital administration; when patient involvement in decision-making can lead to more rational resource management.
- The "co-operation" between doctors of various specialties to deal with chronic diseases, as well as the co-operation between doctors and patients are necessary, in order to optimize the therapeutic effect.
- However, cooperation between medical specialties remains problematic in Greece.
- There are huge gaps in co-operation between doctors and patients to reach the optimum treatment. The deficiencies of the Primary Health Care System do not leave space for improvement; as a result many patients seem to be unsatisfied with the services provided and the relationship with physicians.
- Another phenomenon is the lack of cooperation between different medical specialists dealing with chronic patients.
- 51.7% of patients want to know which doctor will examine them during their primary care appointment. Furthermore, 49.5% consider the doctor's question if they have understood everything about their treatment, important.
- 80% of primary care visits concern chronically patients and 40% of hospitalized admissions.
- According to the British Health System (NHS - National Health Service), no decision should be taken for patients, without patients. However, in Greece, this is not the case, mainly due to the lack of infrastructure and time to serve patients.