

Compensating Patient Partners on Health Research Teams: Barriers, Facilitators, and Implications for Equity

Why is this project important?

- Canadian research teams increasingly rely on patient engagement – including patients as partners in all aspects of the research process – to improve the quality and relevance of research outputs.
- An ongoing challenge in patient engagement is how best to compensate patient partners for their time and expertise.
- Previous research has discussed obstacles to effectively compensating patient partners but has not adequately examined the intersections between compensation practices and equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI).
- Our study aims to fill this gap by identifying compensation-related barriers to and facilitators of patient engagement and exploring how current compensation practices may limit or promote EDI in academic health research.



What are we doing?

- We recruited a diverse sample of participants from four groups: patient partners, health researchers, academic administration and finance employees, and health research funding organization staff.
- We conducted virtual interviews and focus groups exploring participants' experiences with compensation.
- We applied inductive thematic analysis to explore these experiences and identify solutions to compensation practices that challenge equitable patient engagement.
- Our analysis produced seven themes: *Clear expectations and processes, Bureaucratic inertia, Reproduction of privilege, Institutional mistrust, Tax and benefit implications, Funding cycles, and Relational dynamics.*

How will this help?

- Study results will help inform policies and improve practices surrounding patient partner compensation in health research, including those directed at EDI.
- This in turn is expected to boost diverse and equitable patient engagement, contributing to higher quality research outputs and, ultimately, improvements in population health outcomes and health equity.

Who can I contact?

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