



Let's drive patient safety forward!

2024 PATIENT SAFETY CONFERENCE

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Enhancing Patient Safety through Digital Innovation: The Missing Links

The 2024 Patient Safety Conference in Madrid, organised in collaboration with the Sociedad Española de Calidad Asistencial (SECA), the Fundación por la Investigación, Docencia e Innovación en Seguridad del Paciente (FIDISP), the Sistema Español de Notificación en Seguridad en Anestesia y Reanimación (SENSAR) and the Fundació per al Foment de la Investigació Sanitària i Biomèdica de la Comunitat Valenciana (FISABIO).

Under the theme “Enhancing Patient Safety Through Digital Innovation: The Missing Links”, the event brought together healthcare professionals, patient representatives, policymakers, industry leaders, and academics. The premises of the prestigious Medical College of Madrid perfectly suited the forum-style discussions we held. Their historical character reminded us that innovation is the next step in history’s unfolding journey, and that future-oriented ideas must be grounded in the lessons of the past.



CONFERENCE THEME

At a time when the potential of technological innovation to improve patient safety and patient outcomes is increasingly undeniable, tangible results are still a long way off. What are the missing links that prevent the vision of breakthrough digital solutions from translating into genuine improvements in patient safety and outcomes? How can we engage medical teams suffering from staff shortages, undermined by chronic fatigue and overwhelmed by the growing demand for care, to implement changes and redesign their working habits? While some point to the lack of political support, the leadership from healthcare managers or a medical culture of resistance to digital transition, others question the resilience of today’s healthcare systems.

PLENARY SESSIONS

Throughout the day, we explored critical topics at the crossroads of innovation and patient safety, including continuity of care, telemedicine, training, medication safety, and strategies to bridge gaps between innovations and their real-world impact. The wellbeing of healthcare professionals emerged as a central concern, as it was repeatedly emphasised that digital innovation should support, not overwhelm them. By implementing technologies that meet their needs, improve workflows and reduce administrative burdens, we can foster a safer and more sustainable healthcare environment for everyone.



The conference reminded us of the power of collective action. Whether discussing complex challenges or sharing success stories, we saw genuine collaboration and a renewed sense of purpose to drive change together.

INTERACTIVE WORKSHOPS

Alongside the plenary sessions, interactive workshops during our conference offered a unique space for participants to share experiences, exchange ideas, and explore solutions to some of healthcare's most pressing patient safety challenges.

- **Fighting Fatigue Together:** Addressing the widespread issue of fatigue among healthcare professionals, this session explored its impact on safety and wellbeing and introduced actionable strategies for managing fatigue on both local and European levels.
- **Electronic Product Information (ePI):** A collaborative discussion on transforming ePI into an inclusive, user-friendly tool to improve patient safety. Participants explored ongoing initiatives, challenges, and opportunities for cross-sector alignment.
- **Innovation and Implementation Challenges:** Real-world development and implementation of innovative projects often faces unexpected barriers. These workshops highlighted the role of healthcare professionals, practical and agile strategies, and the importance of patient involvement in driving improvements.
- **Nurses, Innovation, and Patient Safety:** Nurses are on the frontline of patient care and their vigilance is essential in preventing medical errors. This session gave them a platform to share what support and resources they need to lead safety improvements and foster innovation in their environments.



These workshops demonstrated the value of structured, collaborative dialogue, and the participants expressed the wish to continue with this format at future events.

BUTTERFLY IMPACT AWARD IN PATIENT SAFETY



At the European Patient Safety Conference in Madrid, we celebrated projects that demonstrate how small actions can drive big changes. This award, inspired by the ‘butterfly effect,’ honours innovative and accessible practices that have a measurable, positive impact on patient safety.



THE WINNER OF THE 2024 BUTTERFLY IMPACT AWARD IN PATIENT SAFETY IS:

The ERNST Consortium (COST Action 19113): The European Researchers’ Network Working on Second Victims.

Presented by Prof. José Joaquín Mira of Miguel Hernández University of Elche, Spain, and Prof. Dr. Reinhard Strametz of Wiesbaden Institute for Healthcare Economics and Patient Safety (WiHeLP), Germany, this project supports healthcare professionals experiencing emotional distress

following patient safety incidents, commonly known as “second-victim syndrome.” Through a collaborative network, the ERNST Consortium provides essential resources to reduce long-term psychological impacts on these professionals, ultimately enhancing patient safety and outcomes.

We also congratulated the distinguished finalists:

2nd Prize: Eliminating Thirst and Dehydration Before Surgery – Led by Dr. Anne Rüggeberg and Dr. Eike Nickel, MaHM, redefining pre-operative fasting protocols for better patient comfort and outcomes.

3rd Prize: Effective Communication and Patient Safety Among Nurses – Presented by Mrs. Doina Carmen Mazilu and Mrs. Viorica Nedelcu, enhancing teamwork and communication among perioperative nurses.

PLENARY SESSIONS OUTCOMES

KEYNOTE LECTURE

Enhancing Patient Safety Through Digital Innovation

During the 2024 Patient Safety Conference, William Monaghan, Group Chief Digital Information Officer at University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust, delivered a thought-provoking keynote lecture on enhancing patient safety through digital innovation.

He discussed the challenges of digital transformation in healthcare, highlighting the gap between the potential of digital technology and the tangible results we've yet to achieve. William emphasised how inefficient systems hinder clinicians' work and stressed the importance of designing user-centric technology that truly supports clinical decision-making, reducing administrative burdens. He also shared powerful insights into how AI and automation can improve patient safety while ensuring that clinicians remain at the heart of decision-making.

Key Takeaways:

- Clinicians must lead digital transformation: It's essential to involve healthcare professionals in every stage of the design, testing, and implementation of digital systems. By prioritising clinicians' needs and insights, technology can be shaped to serve the real challenges they face
- Automation and AI should reduce clinician workload: AI and automation have great potential to alleviate administrative burdens, freeing up healthcare professionals to focus more on patient care. Using AI to streamline documentation, such as generating discharge summaries, helps optimise clinician time while maintaining accuracy.
- Data must be democratised and used to improve patient care: Access to real-time, actionable data is crucial for improving patient safety. Clinicians need the tools and skills to use data effectively, not just for reporting, but for actively guiding clinical decisions, identifying patterns, and preventing adverse outcomes.



HEALTHCARE WORKER WELLBEING AND SAFETY

How the fatigue and wellbeing of the healthcare professionals interact with the uptake and implementation of technologies?

During this key panel discussion moderated by Peter Walsh, the experts Alvaro Cerame, Marta Macías Maroto, Prof. Dr. Reinhard Strametz, William Monaghan, and Pedro Vieira dos Santos explored the complex relationship between digitalisation, healthcare worker well-being, and patient safety. As healthcare evolves with new technologies, it's essential to balance the potential benefits of these innovations with the mental and physical health of healthcare workers.

Key points discussed included:

- The alarming rates of burnout among healthcare professionals and the profound impact this has on both staff and patient safety
- The importance of user-centric design in digital tools to enhance usability and reduce stress
- The need for comprehensive training to close the digital skills gap
- The required support for healthcare workers to prevent burnout and ensure sustainable practices.

The session reinforced that digital innovation must serve to support, not overwhelm, healthcare workers. By designing technologies that improve workflows and reduce administrative burdens, we can ensure a safer, more sustainable healthcare environment for all.

Increased collaboration between industry, healthcare professionals, and patients around the design and successful implementation of digital solutions is key to making this vision a reality.



TRAINING AND SIMULATION

Using innovative technology to empower caregivers and patients to improve patient safety and outcomes

During this session the panelists: Mónica García Bergón, Carolina Mudarra Reche, Jose Ferrer Costa, Pedro Cartaxo Cintra, Jennifer KNÄPPER together with the session moderator, Kira Tosberg explored the potential benefits and challenges of using innovative technology to improve the training of healthcare professionals and the experience of patients. The discussion also covered topics such as ways to engage users, managing their consent, and learning from real-world cases.

Mónica García Bergón introduced the discussion, detailing the significant costs of medical claims, particularly in surgery, and explaining how technologies like video recordings and virtual reality can enhance healthcare training, reduce risks, and improve patient safety.

Key takeaways from the panel discussions:

- Simulation can help create a safe space where healthcare professionals can practice, make mistakes without causing harm, learn from them, and refine their skills.
- Equally important is the use of that technology to recognise and reinforce the right actions of healthcare professionals, as positive feedback during training builds confidence, awareness, and competence.
- Virtual Reality is a powerful tool in training healthcare professionals in soft skills, such as communication and decision-making, providing an engaging and cost-effective solution to improve clinical practice.
- VR can also be used with patients to help them relax during procedures or simulate their future condition under treatment, empowering them to actively participate in decision-making about their own care.
- Video recordings in trauma care and ICU settings enable teams to evaluate care quality in real time or retrospectively, improving communication and ensuring safer patient handling.



MEDICATION SAFETY

Reducing medication errors with digital management and support systems

At the 2024 Patient Safety Conference in Madrid, we also discussed with experts from across Europe the pressing issue of medication safety in healthcare.

The session, moderated by Rob Neeter, explored how technology can play a pivotal role in reducing medication errors and enhancing patient safety, while also addressing the challenges that come with implementing these innovations.

Maria Cruz Martín Delgado shared that 25% of adverse events in Spanish ICUs are medication-related, with approximately 80% of them being preventable, underscoring an urgent need for action. Arvid Haugen presented an innovative Norwegian project that uses digital and paper patient-owned checklists to enhance medication safety in the surgical process, while Santiago Garcia Blanco highlighted the importance of higher levels of investments in digitalisation, and of implementing incident report systems. Eleonora Varntoumian detailed the reasons why a European Patient Safety Strategy including medication safety is needed, and Jose Luis Gomez Ruiz emphasized the potential of automatic medication systems to reduce errors in hospitals.

Key takeaways:

- The importance of electronic prescriptions and barcode medication systems to reduce medication errors.
- The need for training, interoperability, and systemic support to improve medication safety at all levels.
- Advocacy for higher levels of investments in digitalisation and for a European Patient Safety Strategy to address national fragmentation.



TELEMEDICINE

Advancing Patient Safety Through Telemedicine

Telemedicine is transforming healthcare by enabling care delivery at multiple levels. Whether through doctor-patient consultations or specialist advice for remote peers, telemedicine bridges gaps in access and expertise, improving healthcare delivery and outcomes.

Together with our panelists Ana Alvarez Pagola, Michael Wagner, Eduardo Arteaga Bracho, Nuria Gil Mayo, Viktória Ďurajová (Vargová), and Ignacio Boj, and our moderator, Fernando Cassinello Plaza, we explored telemedicine's potential to enhance patient safety and the critical factors for successful implementation.

The session underscored that telemedicine isn't a one-size-fits-all solution but a tool that, when implemented thoughtfully, can make care more accessible, inclusive, and safer, especially for patients in remote areas, those with mobility challenges, or those managing chronic conditions.

Key takeaways from the session included:

- **User-friendly platforms:** Both patients and healthcare professionals need intuitive systems to encourage adoption and usability.
- **Trust and privacy:** To be engaged, patients must trust that telemedicine provides care of comparable quality to in-person visits and feel confident their data is protected.
- **Reliable tools:** Effective peer-to-peer advice requires high quality audio, video, and easy access to monitoring data.
- **Tailored implementation:** Telemedicine must be adapted to the specific needs of care settings and patient groups. Pilot projects are essential for refining processes before scaling.
- **Multidisciplinary collaboration:** Involving nurses, physicians, project managers, administrative staff, and patient representatives ensures telemedicine meets real-world needs.
- **Legal considerations:** Address informed consent, data protection, and professional liability when deploying telemedicine devices, software, or AI tools.
- **Training and awareness:** Empower both patients and professionals to effectively use telemedicine while understanding its limitations.



CONTINUITY OF CARE

Advancing continuity of care through AI-powered digital technologies

Moderated by Daniel Arnal Velasco, this session highlighted that while AI presents significant benefits, its successful integration depends on leadership, training, and collaboration. Ensuring healthcare professionals are equipped to work with AI and involving patients in the conversation are both critical steps toward safer, more efficient, and personalised care.

Together with Jolanta Bilinska, Stacey Orsat, Eske Kvanner Aasvang and Oscar Díaz Cambronero we explored how digital technologies based on AI-derived algorithms can enhance continuity of care and improve patient safety across the care pathway. From pre-operative preparation to post-operative recovery, AI offers opportunities to optimise monitoring, predict risks, and enable timely interventions. But challenges remain.

Key insights from the session:

- The challenge of continuity: Many healthcare professionals act along the patient journey, particularly for patients with multiple pathologies. This complexity makes continuity of care a significant challenge, and AI can help bridge these gaps.
- AI in post-operative care: AI tools can analyse patient parameters to predict complications and support tailored recovery plans, enabling earlier interventions and improved outcomes.
- Remote monitoring and follow-up: Telemedicine and wearable devices allow continuous patient monitoring, bridging gaps between hospital care and home recovery to ensure uninterrupted follow-up.
- The patient’s perspective: Building trust is essential. Patients need clear communication and education about how AI works and how it can enhance their care, ensuring they feel involved and confident.
- Barriers to adoption: Interoperability remains a major hurdle. For AI to work effectively across the care continuum, systems must connect seamlessly, supported by secure, high-quality data. Processes, human resources and data management must be aligned with the aim of fostering AI integration and shared responsibility for continuity of care. Collaboration between sectors is key to overcoming these challenges.



ABOUT



European Patient Safety Foundation is an independent foundation, uniting experts and leading organisations to drive patient safety forward across Europe.

By involving stakeholders such as patient organisations and advocates, healthcare professionals, healthcare providers, academia and life sciences companies in all aspects of our work, including in our governance, we bring together complementary points of view to develop solutions tailored to the complexity of patient safety challenges.

EUPSF PATIENT SAFETY CONFERENCE

European conference and platform for patient safety best practices.

Every year, in addition to other campaigns and actions, EUPSF organises a conference dedicated to patient safety key issues and latest developments.

Our conferences aim to:

- Strengthen and empower the network of leading organisations and individuals across Europe striving for the improvement of patient safety and quality of care;
- Bridge the gap between the European and the local dimension, to bring out common challenges, best practices and ways of cooperation.

These conferences are organised in collaboration with local organisations active in the field of patient safety.

EACH YEAR IN A DIFFERENT COUNTRY



To drive a change for the better quality of care, we need to take into account the realities and cultural diversity of European healthcare environments. This is why the EUPSF Patient Safety Conferences, held annually in different countries, support and promote the work of local and national partners actively engaged in patient safety, to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and good practice within the network and to contribute to a coordinated improvement in patient safety and quality of care across Europe.

- [2022 Stockholm | Sweden](#)
- [2023 Vienna | Austria](#)
- [2024 Madrid | Spain](#)

WHY JOINING EUPSF CONFERENCE

We provide:

✓ Knowledge and Insight

We will bring together experts, thought leaders, and researchers in the field of patient safety. Participants can gain access to cutting-edge research, best practices, and the latest advancements in patient safety initiatives in Europe. These can provide valuable insights and knowledge but also useful strategies for that help with the implementation in their own healthcare settings.

✓ Professional Development

Attending our conference can contribute to professional growth and development. Participants can enhance their understanding of patient safety concepts, acquire new skills, and stay updated on the latest trends in the field. Our conference pays a lot of attention on the implementation perspective which can provide practical tools and techniques that participants can implement in their daily work, ultimately improving patient safety outcomes.

✓ Networking Opportunities

Our conference offers a unique chance to network with professionals and peers from various European countries who share a common interest in patient safety. Participants can exchange ideas, collaborate on projects, and establish connections with key stakeholders, including researchers, policymakers, healthcare practitioners, and industry representatives. These networking opportunities can lead to future collaborations and partnerships.

✓ Recognition and Visibility

We provide a platform to showcase and bring visibility to national patient safety initiatives. We will be presenting successful case studies, research findings, and innovative projects from Austria to attract attention and recognition from a diverse audience of healthcare professionals, researchers, and policymakers across Europe. This will offer an opportunity to share the progress, challenges, and lessons learned from other national patient safety initiatives, ultimately contributing to the collective knowledge and inspiring others to implement similar strategies in their respective countries.

✓ International Perspective

A European conference on patient safety offers participants a broader, international perspective. Participants can gain insights into different healthcare systems, policies, and approaches to patient safety across Europe. Learning from diverse experiences and understanding different cultural contexts can enrich participants' understanding and help them implement innovative solutions in their own healthcare settings.

✓ Collaboration and Partnerships

Our conference fosters collaboration and partnership opportunities. Participants can identify potential collaborators for research projects, quality improvement initiatives, or policy advocacy efforts. The conference environment facilitates open dialogue, idea sharing, and brainstorming which can lead to fruitful collaborations with like-minded professionals.

RESOURCES

ARTICLE



Boulanger S, Cikkelova M, Macias Maroto M, et al. Enhancing patient safety through digital innovation: The missing links. Journal of Patient Safety and Risk Management. 2024;0(0). doi:10.1177/25160435241285224

In the lead-up to the conference, we published a commentary article with our Spanish partners in the Journal of Patient Safety and Risk Management. This article was designed to set the stage for the conference discussions by framing this critical question: If digital health solutions hold such promise for improving patient safety, why are tangible results still often a long way off?

<https://conference.eupsf.org/enhancing-patient-safety-through-digital-innovation-the-missing-links/>

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