

# What do patients think about AI in healthcare?

## Key findings from the EPF survey

28 May 2026

The European Patients’ Forum work on Artificial Intelligence (AI) aims to promote a patient-centric approach to AI. EPF advocates for the development and roll-out of AI solutions in healthcare that genuinely benefit patients by upholding the principles of patient safety, transparency, privacy, human autonomy, co-design, accountability, and education.

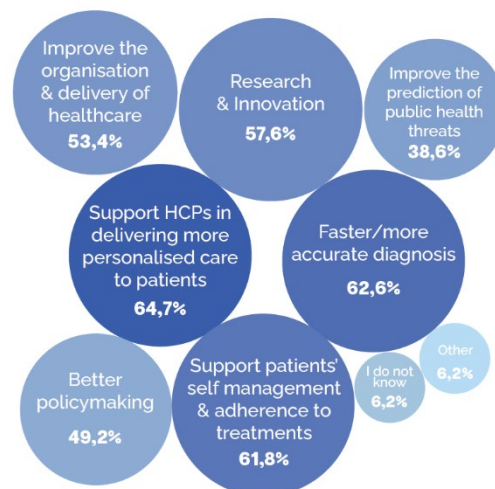
In 2023, EPF was the first EU patient organisation to publish a [position paper](#) outlining patients’ views and expectations regarding development and roll-out of AI in healthcare based on a survey among our members and their members. In 2025, EPF sent out a new questionnaire to its members and beyond and received 874 responses. In 2026, EPF and KU Leuven<sup>1</sup> analysed the results. The findings presented below are based on this survey.

### Most patients feel hopeful about AI benefiting patients, despite some concerns

**Takeaway 1:** Almost all patients (98%) believe that AI could bring benefits to healthcare. Only a very small minority indicated that there are no benefits (2%) or that they do not know (6%).

More specifically, patients believe that the most valuable benefits AI could bring to healthcare are – in order of importance:

- Supporting healthcare professionals in delivering more personalised care to patients (65%),
- Providing faster and more accurate diagnoses (63%),
- And supporting patients' self-management and adherence to treatments (apps, reminders, AI-powered chatbots, wearables, etc.) (62%).



About 1 in 2 patients surveyed also believe that AI can:

- Support research and innovation (new medicines and medical devices) (58%),
- Improve the organisation and delivery of healthcare (identifying and eliminating fraud or waste, scheduling, etc.) (53%),
- And support better policymaking (data analysis and insights, predictions, timely access to information, etc.) (49%).

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Lien De Proost, Drs. Jolien Broekmans and Annouschka Laenen from the Department of Clinical Pharmacology and Pharmacotherapy

**Takeaway 2:** Patients reported that they would be most comfortable with AI being used for analysing test results and medical imaging (e.g. X-rays, MRI) (72%), managing administrative tasks (59%), and diagnosing diseases (54%).

Patients were less comfortable with AI being used for recommending medications and treatment adjustments (42%), assisting in surgeries (robotic-assisted procedures) (43%), and monitoring and predicting health conditions (43%).

### How did patients view on AI in healthcare evolved since 2021?

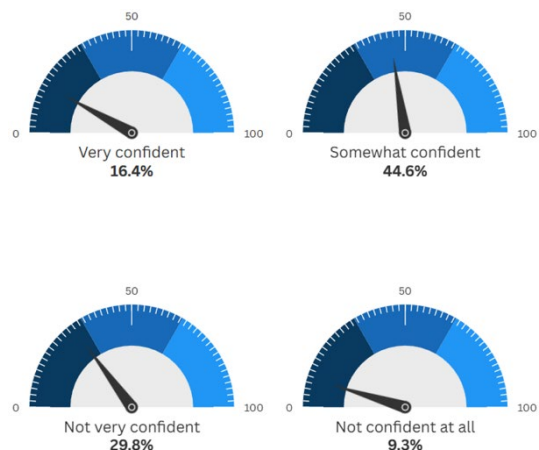
EPF also conducted surveys on AI in healthcare in 2021 and 2023. Although the sample sizes were smaller, some questions reflected those included in the 2025 survey. Below are some of the main takeaways:

- The 2025 findings are broadly consistent with the results from both the 2021 and 2023 surveys, confirming a stable perception among patients that AI can play a positive role in healthcare.
- Across all three surveys, improving diagnosis, supporting healthcare professionals, and advancing research and innovation remain among the most valued applications of AI.
- Support for patients’ self-management and adherence to treatments rose markedly<sup>2</sup>, suggesting growing awareness of AI-powered digital health tools such as apps, reminders, chatbots, and wearables.

**Takeaway 3:** Positive views on AI in healthcare coexist with significant concerns, including concerns about the lack of human empathy and biased AI-driven decisions.

A significant proportion of patients remain not very confident or not confident at all about how AI is applied in healthcare (39%).

The main concerns respondents have about AI in healthcare are the lack of human empathy and personal touch (70%), biased AI-driven decisions (when trained on unrepresentative and biased data) (68%), and AI making incorrect diagnoses (59%).



### How did patients view on AI in healthcare evolved since 2021?

- The 2025 results confirm that a significant proportion of patients still lack trust in how AI is applied in healthcare
- Across all three surveys, concerns related to the loss of human interaction, biased or non-transparent AI systems, and the risk of incorrect diagnoses consistently emerged as key issues.

<sup>2</sup> In 2023, around 50% of patients cited treatment adherence as one of the main benefits that AI could bring to the healthcare sector, compared with over 60% in 2025.

**Takeaway 4:** It is not always clear to patients whether or not they have interacted with AI in their care.

When asked whether they had ever had a healthcare experience involving AI, 17% of respondents answered yes, while 61% answered no. However, more than 1 in 5 respondents (22%) said they were not sure whether AI had been involved in their care.

EPF 2021 and 2025 surveys highlight that uncertainty around the use of AI in healthcare remains relatively high, suggesting that patients are not always clearly informed when AI tools are being used in their care.

### What do surveys on the use of AI in healthcare, carried out in the Member States, reveal?

- An initial comparative analysis of the surveys carried out by our members in Spain<sup>3</sup>, France<sup>4</sup> and the Netherlands<sup>5</sup>, confirm that there is on patients' side a clear consensus that AI can bring important benefits to healthcare, particularly through faster and more accurate diagnoses, support for healthcare professionals, improved efficiency, and better patient support tools such as reminders or self-management applications.
- At the same time, the above-mentioned countries share with EPF major concerns about the impact of AI on the human dimension of care. The most common fears relate to the loss of human interaction and empathy, risks to data privacy and confidentiality, and the possibility of incorrect or opaque AI-driven decisions.

### A strong demand for better patient information on the use of AI in healthcare

**Takeaway 1:** Most patients would prefer to receive information directly from their doctor or healthcare professional (82%).

There was also strong support for AI-specific consent forms before treatment (61%), showing that patients expect transparency and meaningful involvement in decisions about AI use. Far fewer respondents preferred information through hospital websites (39%) or brochures (36%), and only a very small minority (4%) said they did not need to be informed at all.

**Takeaway 2:** An overwhelming majority (93%) believe that doctors should inform patients about the use of AI at the very beginning of their visit or treatment.

Only a very small minority felt that information should only be provided upon request (3%) or was unnecessary (4%).

**Takeaway 3:** Patients also emphasised the importance of explainable and understandable AI.

Most respondents (68%) preferred simplified, patient-friendly explanations about how AI is used in their healthcare, compared to only 24% who wanted detailed technical explanations. Very few

<sup>3</sup> Plataforma de pacientes (POP), [Inteligencia Artificial en salud: Perspectivas de pacientes y familiares](#)

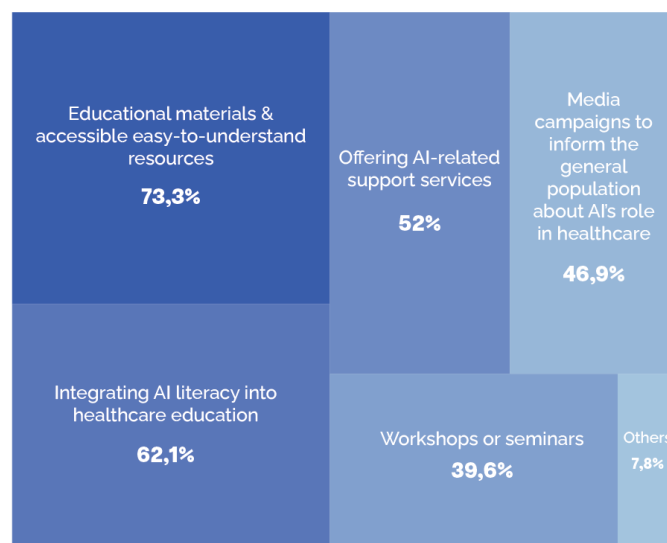
<sup>4</sup> France Assos Sante, [Enquête auprès des représentants des usagers sur l'arrivée de l'intelligence artificielle dans les établissements de santé](#)

<sup>5</sup> Dutch Patients' Federation, [Patiënten onder voorwaarden positief over AI in de zorg](#)

respondents considered a simple mention of AI sufficient (5%) or believed no explanation was necessary (3%).

Concerns about so-called “black box” AI systems were also very prominent. More than half of respondents (55%) said they trust AI only if healthcare professionals are able to understand and explain its reasoning, while a further 33% stated they require full transparency in how AI makes decisions. Only a very small minority were unconcerned about explainability.

**Takeaway 4:** Patients believe that accessible educational materials and easy-to-understand resources (73%), followed by integrating AI literacy into healthcare education (62%) are key to improving AI literacy.



Providing dedicated support services to help patients understand AI in their care (52%), media campaigns (47%) and workshops or seminars (40%) were also seen as important ways to inform and engage the public

### What exactly should patient information on AI in healthcare focus on? Examples and initial feedback from surveys of our members

- **France**<sup>6</sup> –The highest expectation concerns AI used for diagnostic support, such as medical imaging or biological analysis, with 78% of respondents believing these applications require reinforced patient information. This is followed by AI systems supporting therapeutic decision-making, including treatment recommendations (58%), and tools used to synthesise medical records or generate clinical documentation (58%).
- **Netherlands**<sup>7</sup> – Patients who wanted information expressed particularly strong interest in understanding what happens if a doctor disagrees with the AI diagnosis (76%), the risks and limitations of AI systems (72%), and who ultimately holds responsibility for decisions — the healthcare professional or the AI system itself (68%).

<sup>6</sup> France Assos Sante, [Enquête auprès des représentants des usagers sur l’arrivée de l’intelligence artificielle dans les établissements de santé](#)

<sup>7</sup> Dutch Patients’ Federation, [Patiënten onder voorwaarden positief over AI in de zorg](#)

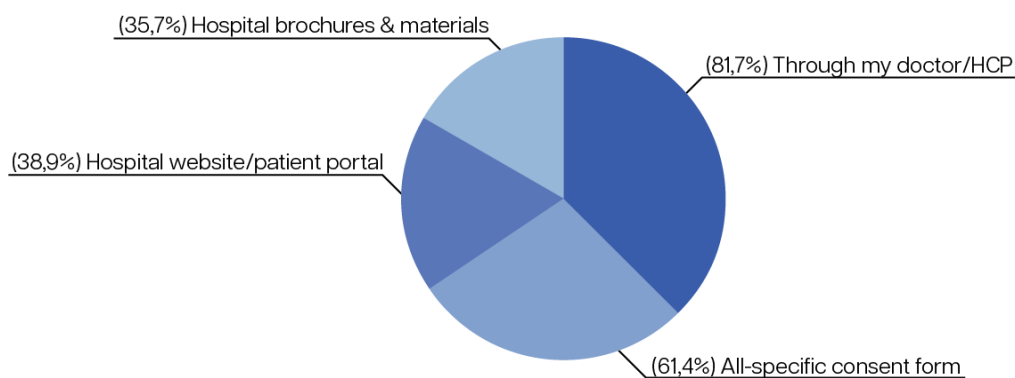
- **Czech Republic<sup>8</sup>** – Patients should automatically be informed when AI is involved in their care, including in advance through channels such as hospital websites or waiting room materials. Recommendations also stress that AI use should be documented in medical records and that physicians must be able to explain AI use in a clear, factual, and non-promotional manner.

**Healthcare professionals remain by far the most trusted actors to guide patients in the transition toward AI-enabled healthcare.**

**Takeaway 1:** Patients’ concerns about AI in healthcare are closely linked to fears that it could weaken or fundamentally change the patient–doctor relationship.

The most frequently cited concern was the loss of human empathy and personal touch (70%), while around half of respondents were worried that doctors might rely too heavily on AI (51%) or use AI tools that are not specifically approved for healthcare purposes (51%). Nearly 40% were also concerned about AI replacing human doctors entirely.

At the same time, healthcare professionals clearly remain by far the most trusted partners to guide patients in this new AI-enabled healthcare environment. An overwhelming majority of respondents (82%) said they would prefer to be informed about AI use directly through their doctor or healthcare professional, far ahead of hospital websites (39%) or brochures (36%).



Similarly, if AI and a doctor disagreed on a diagnosis or treatment, only 3% said they would trust AI based on its accuracy, and almost nobody (0.3%) would fully trust AI alone. Instead, most respondents would either seek a second opinion from another doctor (51%) or request explanations from both the doctor and the AI system before deciding (26%).

**Takeaway 2:** Patients expressed mixed views regarding how much control patients should have over the use of AI in their healthcare.

<sup>8</sup> National Association of Patients’ Organizations (NAPO), Czech Republic, [STANOVISKO PACIENTŮ K POUŽÍVÁNÍ UMĚLÉ INTELIGENCE VE ZDRAVOTNICTVÍ](#)

Around 38% agreed that AI could be used for background or administrative processes, but that patients should retain the right to refuse its involvement in medical decision-making.

At the same time, nearly one-third of respondents (30%) believed patients should have full control over any use of AI in healthcare, including administrative functions such as scheduling or medical record management.

A similar proportion (29%) stated that they trust AI as long as healthcare professionals oversee the final decisions.

At the same time, EPF emphasises that efforts to build AI literacy must target *both* healthcare professionals and patients, particularly as AI tools become increasingly accessible directly to patients. While many initiatives focus primarily on clinicians, patients should not be overlooked and should be empowered to engage with healthcare professionals with the highest possible level of AI literacy and understanding.

## About EPF

The European Patients' Forum (EPF) is an umbrella organisation of patient organisations across Europe and across disease areas. Our 82 members include disease-specific patient groups active at the EU level and national coalitions of patients representing 24 countries across Europe. [www.eu-patient.eu](http://www.eu-patient.eu)

## About KU Leuven

Dr. Lien De Proost, Drs. Jolien Broekmans and Annouschka Laenen from the Department of Clinical Pharmacology and Pharmacotherapy contributed to the analysis of the EPF 2025 survey results and developed graphical representations highlighting key findings and areas of particular importance.