

PREVENTING & ADDRESSING UNRELIABLE PAM® RESPONSES

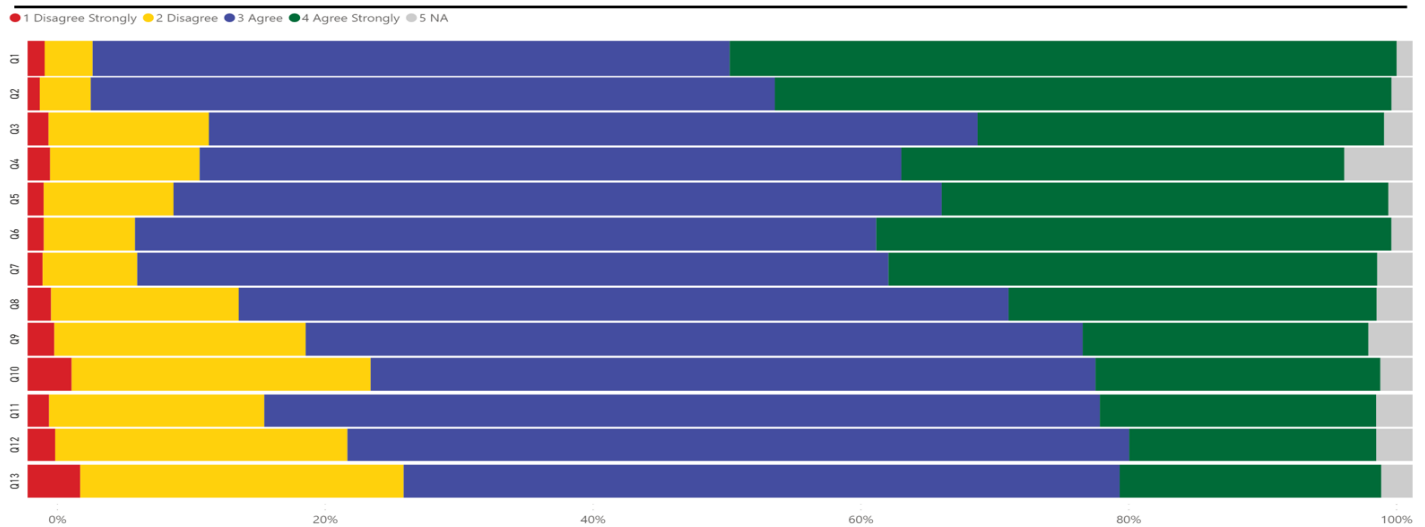


Hundreds of research studies published in more than 30 countries since 2004 consistently demonstrate that the Patient Activation Measure® (PAM®) reliably and accurately measures the knowledge, skills and confidence related to an individual’s health self-management ability. However, accurate measurement requires that PAM survey respondents fully participate and answer each statement as truthfully as possible.

Inaccurate responses are a challenge for any survey. Fortunately, the rate of unreliable response with PAM is quite low. Moreover, PAM statements have a deliberate difficulty structure that allows unreliable response patterns to be quickly identified and addressed. This can help ensure that each respondent receives the appropriate level of support at the right time.

PAM Survey Agreement Difficulty

The statements comprising the PAM survey are intentionally designed to be more difficult to find agreement with as the respondent proceeds through the assessment. As noted in the PAM answer distribution chart below, blue and green bars, representing Agree and Agree Strongly, generally grow shorter for each successive statement in the questionnaire. Conversely, a higher rate of Disagree and Disagree Strongly responses (yellow and red bars, respectively) builds from start to finish. These varied degrees of agreement create a Guttman-like scale characterized by a higher rate of difficulty as the respondent progresses through the survey.



On average, 90% of respondents provide reliable answer data to the PAM survey statements. However, response patterns that differ significantly from the known difficulty structure of PAM should be treated with caution. In certain cases, the data should not be considered usable or reliable. These potentially unreliable survey answer patterns include:

- Disagree Strongly for all statements. This pattern accounts for less than 0.3% of completed assessments.
- Agree for all statements. This pattern typically accounts for 4% to 6% of completed PAM assessments.
- Agree Strongly for all statements. The “perfect score” accounts for 3% to 5% of completed PAM assessments.
- Not Applicable for 4 or more statements. NA should be used infrequently, especially for individuals managing a long-term health condition. Less than 1% of PAM surveys have four or more NAs.

PAM Scoring Resources Flag Unreliable Answer Patterns

Insignia Health’s automated scoring resources for PAM surveys identify and flag unreliable answer patterns to help ensure that follow up support does not push individuals beyond their true self-management abilities.

- Surveys with all Disagree Strongly answers are designated as PAM Level 1. If possible, it is recommended to re-administer PAM for these individuals.
- Surveys with all Agree answers are given a default PAM score of 51 and designated as PAM Level 2 to ensure that coaching and support does not exceed a person’s self-care ability.
- Surveys with all Agree Strongly receive a PAM score of 100 and PAM Level 4. However, it is recommended to re-administer PAM for these individuals within 6 months.

Addressing Unreliable Responses

Factors that can diminish the reliability of PAM responses, and ways to address these situations, include:

Challenge	Solution
<p>The people directed to administer PAM think: <i>“I know my patients well enough.”</i> They may believe PAM is a waste of time and that no new insights will be gained. They might bias the respondent with a negative perspective about the survey.</p>	<p>Individuals administering PAM should know that it will only take a few minutes to complete, and the results will help them to provide the right level of support for each individual.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PAM is an objective, consistent measure to immediately know which individuals need more or less assistance with health management • PAM level can help them more effectively tailor support to each individual’s self-management ability • Change in PAM score over time provides a quantifiable comparison of the support, treatments and interventions prescribed.
<p>Individuals taking PAM believe: <i>“This is not worth my time.”</i> As such, they are more likely to answer all statements with Agree to get through the assessment quickly and without much thought.</p>	<p>When introducing PAM, share that the assessment will take less than 5 minutes, and that the responses will help you provide more personalized support. If the first 5-7 statements are answered the same, it might be worthwhile to pause and check for understanding. Indicate that most individuals vary in how they respond to the statements, and that you want to be sure their responses truly reflect how they view their health.</p>
<p>Individuals may want to appear to be more in control of their health than they really are, resulting in surveys with all or many Agree Strongly answers.</p>	<p>When introducing PAM, emphasize that there are no right or wrong answers, just what is true for the individual today. If the first 5-7 statements are answered the same, it might be worthwhile to pause and check for understanding. Indicate that most individuals vary in how they respond to the statements, and that you want to be sure their responses truly reflect how they view their health.</p>
<p>Individuals want their health coaches or providers to “look good” and may answer with all or many Agree Strongly answers.</p>	<p>Try to administer PAM early in the relationship, before a personal connection becomes established. If a relationship already exists and PAM is administered verbally, consider having someone other than the coach/provider administer PAM.</p>
<p>Individuals with a known cognitive impairment, such as early onset dementia, Alzheimer’s, or other serious mental impairment, may struggle to provide reliable answer to any survey.</p>	<p>Individuals with depression, schizophrenia, and bipolar disorder have shown to take PAM with high reliability. However, in situations involving permanent or temporary cognitive impairment or disability, consider using Caregiver PAM if the caregiver has direct control or influence over the individual’s health management.</p>
<p>Individuals have difficulty reading, speaking or comprehending English.</p>	<p>PAM has been translated and validated in dozens of languages. Try to find the best match for individuals who are not proficient in English.</p>