

Profile of the successful and effective physician: Patient's view

Summary by: Dr. Elmahdi Elkhammas

Patients have a tendency to trust physicians. They know that medicine is a special field that some look at it as a holy profession. They translate that to ultimate trust most of the time. They trust us with their lives. They trust us with their confidential and personal information. Some times they do not even ask for our credentials and they just assume that we are qualified and well trained to take care of them. So they assume that we are ethical, skilled and experienced. For these reasons they accept our advice and follow our orders and submit their lives to our decisions. I believe that today's patients are more sophisticated than patients from 40 years ago. They really go far more in their characterization of their ideal doctor. They want to be partners in the decision making. I just recently attended a lecture by Dr. Neelim M. Bendapudi, Associate professor, Fisher College of Business, OSU, who is interested in consumer, marketing and health services related issues.

Dr. Bendapudi and her colleagues did a study that was published in a Mayo clinic proceeding. I like to share with you the seven ideal behavioral themes that patients want in the ideal and effective physician.

1. **Confident:** patients like to interact with a confident physician. They feel safer listening to a confident doctor talking to them.
2. **Empathetic:** patients are looking for a doctor who take their problem seriously and is sympathetic with their problem. Even if the problem is simple you need to understand that it is important to the patient and that is why he/she seeking your medical help.
3. **Humane.** It is self explanatory that patient loves their doctor to be humane and treat them with dignity.
4. **Personal:** patients like to see that their doctor is interested in them as a human being and they are not just numbers. So it is important that the doctor should try to know the patient and be interested in their health as well as general well being and know who they are.
5. **Forthright:** It does not matter which culture, patients want to know and understand what is wrong with them and how to treat it. So they like to have their doctor explain things to them in a simple language.
6. **Respectful:** Patients want their doctor to treat them with respect. It is important that the doctor talk to the patient as an equal partner who has the same interest to solve the issue at hand. Patients with lower education pay more attention to this character.
7. **Thorough:** It is easier to understand how patients are scared and concerned about their problem. They want to know that their physician is thorough and

will not miss another problem that they may have. They want to know that their physician is not in a rush to leave the room as soon as possible. So it is a good idea to give time to the patient to ask questions. Sit down and talk rather than holding the door knob while talking.

The above mentioned profile that patient love to have in their doctor is within reach of most physicians. The main point is to be honest with our selves and deal with medical issues that we are trained for and have the expertise to handle.