

Reshaping American Medicine: It's your health- but should you be calling the shots?

Patient Centered Practice

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A part of the Affordable Care Act, Patient Centered Practice is the new trend in health care-moving from the more traditional medical model to a patient centered approach to care. Patient centered care is an innovative approach to the planning, delivery and evaluation of health care. It is simplistically based on welcoming patients as "partners" in care.

One would think that medical care was always patient centered but no, historically it has been physician directed and dominated, with the patient's role being frequently

passive. In Patient Centered Care, the role of the patient is one of action and collaboration.

Whether you are ill, having a routine check-up or a follow up after a hospitalization, we always have questions for our doctor. For many older adults speaking with the doctor is even a more daunting task. Sometimes called "white coat syndrome" when a person's blood pressure rises or getting "tongue tied" merely by being in the doctor's office, how often is it that we leave the doctor's office not really communicating what is on our mind?

A recently published study confirmed that many patients do experience difficulty in communicating with their physician. Participants in the study responded that they felt limited in how they could speak with their doctor. Some reported that they wanted to further discuss their health care decisions, but were uncomfortable voicing those wishes. Many did not want to upset or anger the doctor "who knows best".

As a geriatric care manager I have heard my clients making similar statements. "I don't want to bother the doctor", "I don't want him to think I'm questioning his judgment" or "I don't want him to get upset or angry with me"! Everyone benefits by having an advocate accompany them for difficult medical appointments. As one grows older with multiple chronic problems, the educated family member or the professional geriatric care manager needs to have an active part in the health care team. This is why Patient Centered Practice is the new "buzzword" in medicine. Health care providers nationally are developing creative models where patients can become increasing participants their health care choices.

Research has shown that patients involved in their own healthcare have greater positive healthcare outcomes and voice increased satisfaction with their medical providers. Elder Life Management continues with its mission, only by being an educated consumer can you truly prepare for your elder life.

A New Trend in Health Care

Moving from a traditional medical model to a patient-centered model of care

Traditional Medical Model		Patient-Centered Model
Patient's role is passive <i>(The patient is quiet)</i>	→	Patient's role is active <i>(The patient asks questions)</i>
Patient is recipient of treatment. <i>The patient doesn't voice concerns, even if there's a problem</i>	→	Patient is partner in treatment plan <i>(The patient asks for information about other options)</i>
Provider dominates as decision-maker— <i>The provider does not offer options</i>	→	Provider collaborates with patient in making decisions <i>(The provider offers options and discusses pros and cons)</i>
Disease-centered <i>(Illness is the focus of daily activities)</i>	→	Quality-of-life-centered <i>(The patient focuses on family and other activities)</i>
Provider does most of the talking <i>(The provider does not allow time for questions)</i>	→	Provider listens more and talks less <i>(The provider allows time for discussion)</i>
Patient complies (or not)	→	Patient participates in treatment plan that incorporates culture and family traditions

Source: adapted from

<http://www.esrdnet5.org/Files/Education/Training-Mod/Module-2--Patient-Centered-Care.aspx>

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