

Physician Responsibility to Patients – A Patient’s Opinion

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An argument why some physicians fail to provide total care has been they are over-worked and under-staffed. This was mentioned when I argued my opinion that family physicians are failing to bring prostate cancer awareness to their aging male patients (<https://tinyurl.com/2fd56xr5>).

In the case of family physicians of whom I took particular aim as to prostate and prostate cancer awareness to their male patients – particularly aging male patients – it is my opinion that if they do not feel they can manage total concern and care of their patients whatever their ailment, they should not be advertising they are accepting new patients.

I can thoroughly understand physicians who feel they have reached or over-extended the number of patients they can reasonably care for no longer accepting new patients, yet for their current patients they should be responsible in providing this awareness.

Those still accepting patients should require they maintain ethical standards of care that include not only treating the ailment or ailments the patient may currently require, but to also take the time to know and address each patient’s total health, not just the ailment the patient came for treatment.

Demanding? Yes! But physicians should not be in, or continue in, their field of medicine if beyond their capability. They must be aware of the total health issues the patient has been, or still is, experiencing since all could be contributing to the current issue. They should be aware of issues that can befall both their female and male patients, and address for patient awareness those possible, and often likely, issues they may later experience. Prominent for women would be breast cancer, for men prostate cancer, followed by lung cancer for both genders.

Although we often read or hear reference to the Hippocratic Oath, “first, do no harm” (or “primum non nocere”), it is pretty much understood in the medical community the oath has not been a requirement to being awarded the title Medical Doctor, M.D., upon graduation from medical schooling that was sufficient to have earned that title. However, it still remains a practice in most medical schools for students to compile their own set of standards they feel they have learned and openly state their personalized declaration of what it means to be a physician. More often than not, excerpts of the more modern Hippocratic Oath are included. In essence, “do no harm” continues to exist.

Patient lives can be saved or extended by physicians who provide their patient total, comprehensive care to include knowing their overall total health and addressing awareness of health issues prominent to their gender