

2010 Instruction Course: 2618-1

The Lost Art Of Medicine

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1

What is the art of medicine?

- Placing the patient's interest above all others
- Keeping the patient fully informed
- Answering their questions
- Allaying their fears
- Creating a friend
- Giving the patient your time and attention
- Touch
- Time management

2

Placing the patient's interest above all others

- If you always do what's best for the patient, you never have to worry about your ethics.
- The patient's interest must come before yours, the insurance company, the hospital, or the surgery center.

3

Keeping the patient fully informed

- Explain all diagnostic studies and side effects. Use simple language.
- The same for surgical procedures. I used TV tapes that I produced to explain all surgeries. Don't promise what you can't deliver.
- Go over the possible complications in detail.
- Be up front about fees and other charges.

4

Answering their questions.

- Use TV or DVD as well as brochures to inform the patient. That will decrease the number of questions.
- Sit down to talk to patients. That puts them at ease.
- Listen.
- Be honest.
- Be realistic.

5

Creating A Friend

- In general, people don't sue their friends.
- Build a relationship based on honesty and the patient's best interest.
- Patients know when they're being misled.

6

Allaying their fears!

- I believe all nurses and physicians should experience a serious illness early in their careers.
- Ill patients are frightened, and many times, don't feel well.
- Most have no idea what lies ahead of them.

7

Giving the patient your time and attention.

- Time management is important in running a successful and busy practice.
- It's possible to make rounds quickly. Walk in and assess the patient's progress, answer questions and leave. Five minutes max.
- Except the day of discharge. Pull up a chair and say "I'll sit here until I've answered all your questions." Five minutes max.
- When you have a complication, make rounds a minimum of four times a day.

8

Time Management

Time is your most valuable asset!

You are in complete control of your time. Use it wisely.

Time is money!

9

Why is time management important?

It dictates:

How much time you spend with your family.

How much time you have for other interest.

How your patients see you.

How your staff sees you.

How your associates see you.

How you perceive your own self image.

10

How It Works

Try to determine where you spend most of your time

Dictating referral letters?
Dictating operative notes?
Writing prescriptions?
Writing pre- and post-operative orders?
History & Physicals?
Discharge Summaries?
Explaining surgical procedures?
Explaining diagnostic studies?
Making hospital rounds?
Dealing with surgical complications?
Seeing patients?
Donating time to hospital committees?
Dealing with third party payers?

11

How It Works

Duplicate yourself.

Delegate – Delegate – Delegate
(But circle back to make sure it was done correctly.)

Use automation.

Computers have made this easy.

Adopt electronic records.

Integrate audiograms, lab studies, and medical images into electronic records.

12

How It Works

I often hear doctors complain about their schedule.

They say the front desk overbooks them.

Duh! Who do the employees at the front desk work for?

13

Touch

- What do people do when they meet a stranger? They shake hands.
- Touch is a part of human contact.
- Touch your patients respectfully. It seals the relationship.

14

Why is the Art of Medicine Important?

- The Patient:
 - Will have confidence in your ability.
 - Will trust you.
 - Will not sue you.
 - Will have a positive attitude going into surgery.
 - Will accept a serious complication.
 - Will get well quicker.
 - Will fight the insurance company in your behalf.

15

Listening

- “Listen to the patients, they will tell you what is wrong with them.”
- Sage advice

16

Taking Enough Time

- Physician interruption studies
- Patient's Opening
 - 1984 – 77% interrupted within 17sec
 - 1999 - 72% interrupted within 23 sec
- Ask open ended questions
- Listen & never interrupt during the first minute

1. Beckman HB, Frankel DM. The Effect of Physician Behavior on the Collection of Data. Ann Intern Med. 1984; 101:652-656.
2. Hanel MA, Epstein RM, Flowers K, Beckman HB. Soliciting the Patient's Agenda: Have We Improved? JAMA. 1999; 281:3: 283-287.
3. Dyche L, Swiderski D. The Effect of Physician Solicitation Approaches on Ability to Identify Patient Concerns. J Gen Intern Med. 2005; 20: 207-210.

17

Taking Enough Time

- Body language
 - Appearance still counts
 - If you look like a doctor, the patients will think that you are a doctor
 - If you look like a golf pro, the patients will wonder if you are a doctor
 - SMILE
- Speech and tone are noticed
 - Choose your words carefully
 - Be sincere
 - Always control your temper

18

Communication vs. Communicating

- Communication = communicating
- Example: competent (medical vs. legal)
- Use understandable terms and plain English
- Synthesis – the “W’s”
 - What’s wrong
 - What can and cannot be done
 - What are the procedures involved
 - What are the available options
 - What are the expected outcomes
 - What are Plans A, B, C, etc.
 - What is the follow-up
- Always invite questions at the end of each encounter

19

Informed Consent

Overall average recall rate after 1 wk.

40 %

If written materials provided:

50 %

Maldjian AS, Ellis AP, Irish JC. Informed consent to facial plastic surgery. Arch Facial Plast Surg, vol 6, 2004, 26-30.

20

Sense of Humor

- Rarely sued physicians- LISTEN
 - Statements of orientation
 - “I will answer all of your questions.”
 - Forms with visit goals & permitted questions
 - Laughed & used humor
 - Solicited patient’s opinion
 - Checked understanding
 - Encouraged patients to talk
- Remain appropriate & smile

ProAssurance Risk Management Seminar

21

Using the telephone

- Telephone can be your friend
- Be the “Caller” not the “Callee”
- Follow-up phone calls following:
 - Office procedures
 - Outpatient procedures
 - *Even if you leave a voice mail*

22

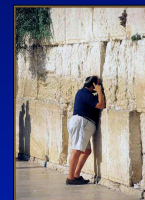
EMR

- In a state of flux – “Meaningful Use”
- Requires more time
- Use to your advantage
 - Enter as much data ahead of time as possible
 - Extender or scribe
- Legal nightmare if used improperly

23

Top Ten Ways to Guarantee a Lawsuit

1. Don't keep detailed records.
2. Don't document informed consent discussions.
3. “Fix” records if something goes wrong.
4. Trust the patient to follow through on referrals.
5. Don't check the chart when ordering medication.
6. Don't say anything if something goes wrong.
7. Diagnose over the telephone.
8. Don't care whether patients like you.
9. Assume each patient needs just a few minutes.
10. Don't track test results (Larry McNeil story).

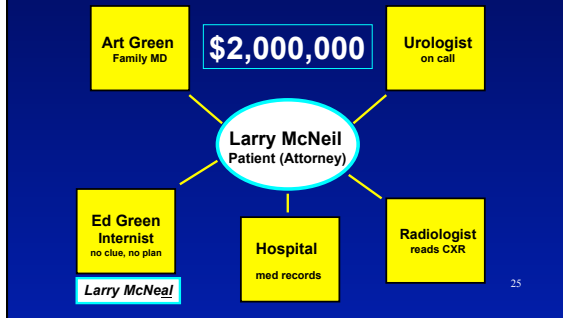


1. Rice, Berkeley, “10 Ways to Guarantee a Lawsuit”, Medical Economics, July 8, 2005. <http://www.mednet.com/2005/07/08/10-ways-to-guarantee-a-lawsuit/>

2. Young, Amy, “Top Ten Ways to Guarantee a Lawsuit”, MedNotes, Medical Mutual Ins. Co of NC, Summer 2007, p. 7. <http://www.mednotes.com/2007/07/07/top-ten-ways-to-guarantee-a-lawsuit/>

24

Tracking Records

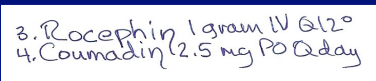


When a complication occurs...

- Be honest & tell the truth.
- Spend more time with the patient.
- Timing is important.
- Apologies are *very* important.
 - Apologizing vs. admitting fault
 - There is an art to apologizing – practice
 - Remind the patient & family that you discussed possible complications preoperatively
 - Reassure the patient that you will provide continued care
- Always talk to families.
- Maintain contact with the patient and family.
- Disclose in proportion to your “data set”.
 - Vanderbilt study – Coumadin error

Vanderbilt Study

1. Elderly man, atrial fibrillation, admitted with infection.
2. Handwritten orders for Rocephin & Coumadin.



3. Nurse gave 12.5 mg instead of 2.5 mg.
4. Next morning, patient suffered a massive stroke.
5. Doctor rounds at 6am, notified of stroke & error.
6. At 6am, family wants to know, “What happened to Dad”?

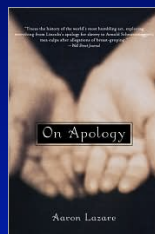
How Much to Disclose (complete data set)

- Scenarios
 - 1. No disclosure
 - “I don’t know.”
 - 2. Partial disclosure
 - “Stroke may have been caused by a medication error.”
 - 3. Substantial disclosure
 - “Your father received too much Coumadin.”
 - 4. Complete disclosure
 - “The nurse misread my handwriting and gave your father 10x the dose of Coumadin which caused him to stroke.”

On Apology

Anatomy of an apology

1. Acknowledge the offense.
2. Accept personal responsibility.
3. Express genuine regret.
4. Insure not going to happen again.
5. Offer reparation.



Lazare A. On Apology. Oxford University Press. New York, 2004.
ISBN -13: 978-0-19-518911-7, ISBN -10: 0-19-518911-8

Some Final Thoughts

- It’s called the “*practice*” of medicine for a reason
- Practice the *art* rather than the *motions*
- Learn from older, wiser, experienced physicians
- Study & learn about customer service
- Care for, not just care about, your patients
 - Don’t practice assembly line medicine
 - Don’t cut corners
 - Don’t do it just for the money
 - Don’t abandon common sense
- “Good judgment comes from experience and experience comes from bad judgment.”

1. Glen Peter. *It's Not My Department*. Berkley Trade, New York, 1990, ISBN 0-425-13242-0.
2. Bell CR, Zimke R. *Managing Knock Your Socks Off Service*. AMACOM, New York, 1992, ISBN 0-8144-7784-4.

Summary

- Place the patient's interest above all others.
- Keep the patient fully informed, answer their questions, and allay their fears.
- Create a friend.
- Give the patient your time, attention, and touch.
- Take enough time to listen, communicate, and invite questions.
- Use a sense of humor.
- Learn to delegate and to spend your time well.
- Spend the most time with patients who have had complications.
- Learn how to apologize.
- Manage your time effectively.

31

• The patient is not the enemy!

32

- **You know who the enemy is!**
- **Take out your anger and frustration on the insurance company, not the patient!**

33

To help you focus your anger, consider this:

In 2005, United Healthcare paid its CEO:

\$125,000,000.00

Count the "0"s!

34

"Lost" and now "Found"

Congratulations...

We hope that we have helped you to find

"The Lost Art of Medicine"

www.earcentergreensboro.com

35

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36