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**‘ENGLISH AS A MEDIUM IN  
THE DOCTOR-PATIENT COMMUNICATION:  
INTERNATIONAL VIEWPOINT’**



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# Factors that enhance doctor-patient communication

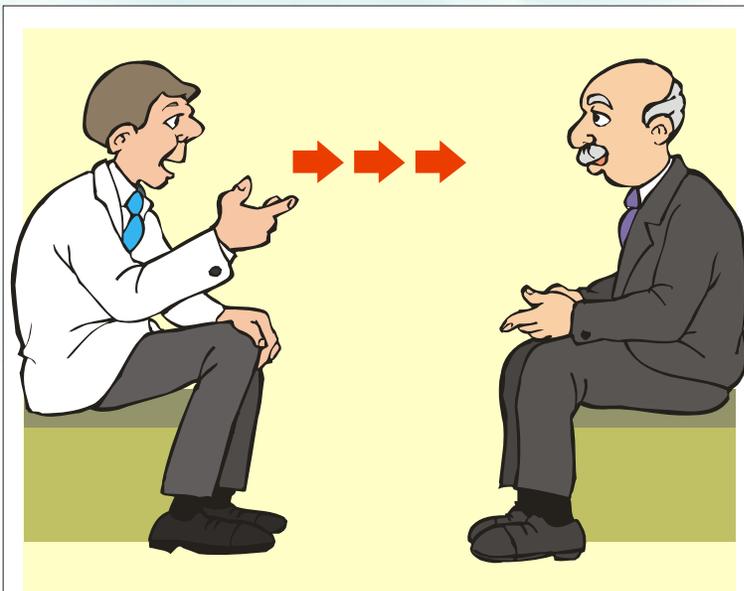
Communication and interaction with the patient is an integral part of a doctor's job. As a result of advancements in technology, patients today have greater access to information on health issues and expect more dedicated communication from their doctors. Let's examine three factors that may enhance communication between doctors and patients:

- two-way communication
- biopsychosocial content
- and nonverbal communication.

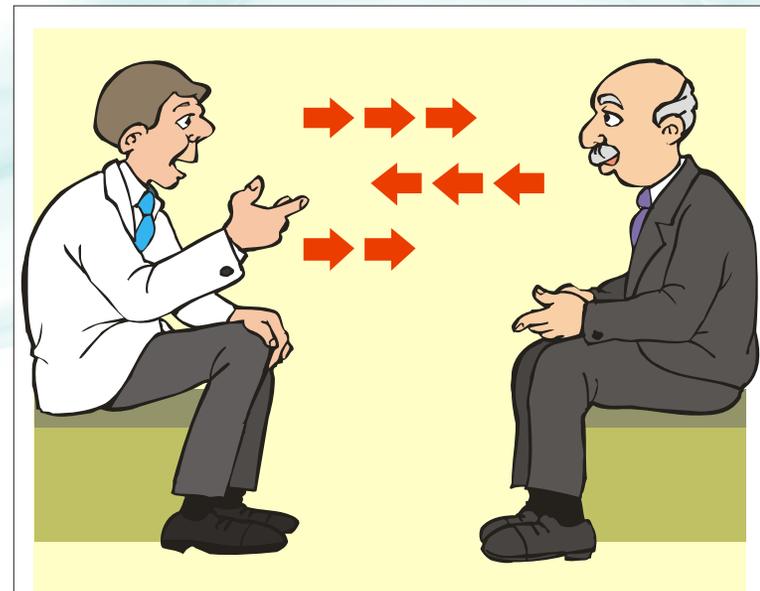
It is also important to mention such factors as culture and practicality that may be barriers to proper communication. The involvement of a health psychologist is also a good idea.

# Models of communication

Communication is not only a basic part of our everyday lives, but an essential one, in the sense that we cannot *not* communicate.



Transmission model



Interactional model

# Defining communication



Verbal communication



Voice management



Non-verbal communication



Active listening



Cultural awareness



# Verbal communication

**Doctor:**

Do you have any history of **cardiac arrest** in your family?

**Patient:**

No, we've never had no **trouble with the police.**

cardiac arrest = heart attack



# Voice management

Paralanguage is very important, as we can add extra meaning to what is actually being said.

- Intonation
- Word stress
- Speed
- Loudness of voice
- Pitch
- Pausing



# Non-verbal communication

Just as doctor is observing the patient, the patient will also be watching the doctor.

Posture, eye contact, gestures, as well as words, send messages.

- Touch
- Eye contact
- Proximity
- Environment
- Clothing and accessories
- Facial expressions
- Orientation
- Posture



# Active listening

What is the difference between **listening** and **hearing**?

- Using phrases like *I see*, *Right*, *Uh-huh*, etc.
- Clarifying and summarising
- Proper body language (eye contact, orientation, etc.)



# Cultural awareness

## **Cultural awareness means ...**

... recognising that your beliefs, habits and attitudes are inherently biased and can be puzzling to others. It also means being tolerant of difference, being flexible and willing to embrace change. However, cultural awareness does not mean having to leave your personal beliefs behind. It means realising that language and culture are inextricably linked and, as such, cannot be separated. Lack of cultural awareness can result in unintentionally offending others.

- Language
- Religion
- Beliefs
- Values
- Customs/habits
- Festivals
- Art
- Literature
- Music

# Piecing it all together

Verbal, non-verbal communication, listening, voice management and cultural awareness all play an important part in helping to make communication more accurate, effective and supportive.



# Two approaches to communication

## **Doctor-centered approach**

- disease and patient were completely separate
- tightly controlled
- doctors take dominant role
- patients have limited participation
- patients are not expected to participate actively
- patient's health is entirely in the hands of the doctor
- doctors ask leading questions
- impact of disease on patients' life is barely considered

## **Question type(s):**

Closed questions / leading questions

# Two approaches to communication

## **Patient-centered approach**

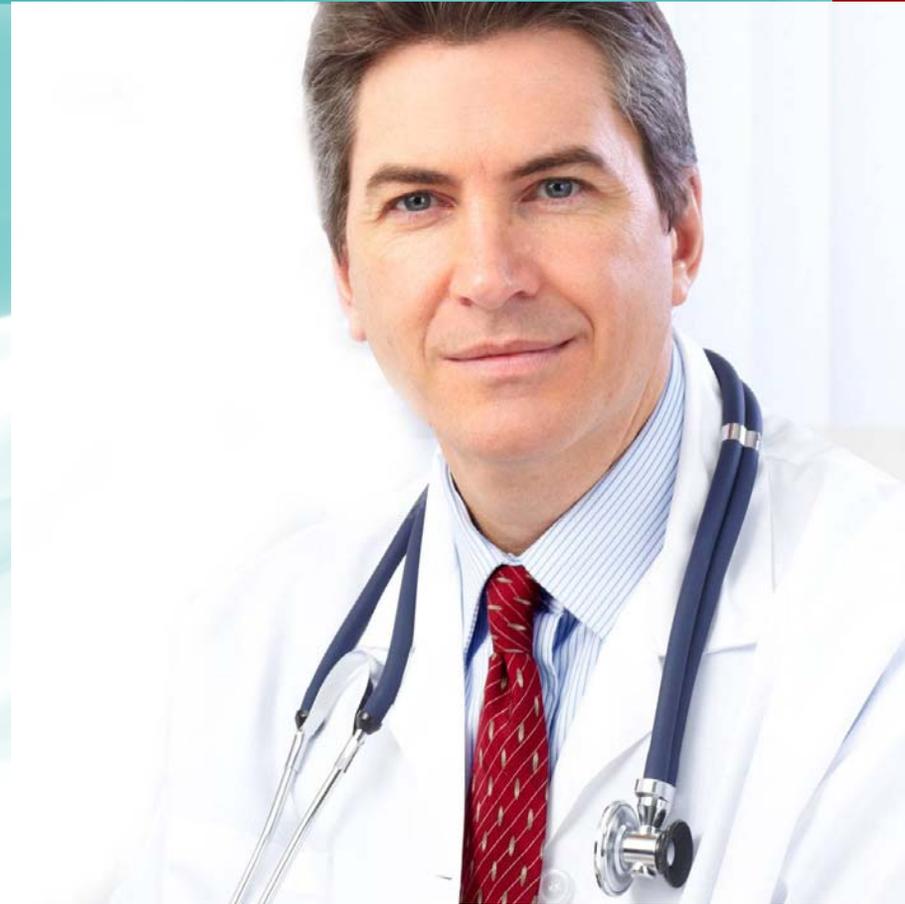
- patient is expert of his/her own disease
- patient is the main source of information
- holistic approach
- social, physical and economic factors are important
- doctors show more empathy
- patients are more likely to comply with treatment
- doctors are more responsive to patient cues

## **Question type(s):**

open questions

# Cultural factors that doctors as a professional group share

- high levels of personal responsibility
- high status
- clear code of ethics
- specific body of knowledge and use of language
- need for evidence / logic



# Benefits of good communication

Communication is not just about being 'nice', but produces a more effective consultation for both patients and doctors ... (it) improves accuracy, efficiency and supportiveness in the consultation.





**Thank you for your attention**



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