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| |  | | --- | | An ailing patient should have easy access to his or her doctor’s record of treating similarly afflicted patients. Through gaining such access, the ailing patient may better determine whether the doctor is competent to treat that medical condition.  Write a response in which you discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with the recommendation and explain your reasoning for the position you take. In developing and supporting your position, describe specific circumstances in which adopting the recommendation would or would not be advantageous and explain how these examples shape your position | |

Healthcare as a service is important for the wellbeing of the population, and transparency in this field, as in any field, is vital. It is important for hospitals and doctors to be transparent with patients about the different parts of the treatment process. But does this mean that a patient should be able to see their doctor's record of treating patients in the past? This is a complex issue, with many aspects to be considered. One could argue that this wouldn't function as transparency, but as a privacy issue, and a reduction of the work put in by doctors in the healthcare system.

Doctors aim to do their best when treating their patients, and a reasonable assumption to make here is that patients already know what field the doctors work in. (For instance, cardiology, nephrology, etc.) However, they may be curious as to how their doctor did in curing other similar patients' issues. This is quite a shaky and tedious way for them to think, due to various factors that one may not immediately think about. If a doctor treated 5 patients having similar conditions, where 2 healed quickly and 3 did not improve, then it is unreasonable for a patient who, say, has access to this information, to believe that they have a 40% chance of solving their health issue. This is because the other patients may each come from different backgrounds, have different diets and routines, and may simply have different body metabolisms. This may even scare the new patient into thinking that the doctor is unfit to carry out whatever treatment or procedure they plan on executing. It is important to remember that doctors go through many years of studies and practice to be able to work for the common man; If they had not passed their past evaluations, they would be held back until they do. Hence, simply having access to the past records of a doctor would not help a patient in determining their competency.

But what about all the talk about transparency, one might ask? Indeed, there are other aspects of the healthcare system that ought to be made clear to the public. Details of what different payments are for, exact information about side-effects and post-treatment safety after a procedure: all these should not be shielded from an ailing patient. But a doctor's past record is not like the aforementioned things; humans are complex machines, each functioning in a unique way, with different physical characteristics. It is highly possible that a previous patient of a doctor had a different undeclared condition that led their health condition to worsen, it may be the case that one of the patients came to the doctor after their health issue worsened beyond repair. The next question one may pose is: Why not let that information be available, let the patient judge it all by themselves? But no, that would be a violation of the privacy of other patients. It would serve as a bad precedent, in general, for people to have access to the health conditions of strangers. Thus, though transparency is of peak importance, it does not serve a valid argument in favour of the given claim.

Finally, a person who is in favour of the claim, but understands its faults, may wonder how they can feel safe going to a doctor; what if a doctor has had an extremely bad track record with a certain ailment? This is where the health system must do its part. Decisions on which doctor is best to aid people suffering from a disease must be taken confidentially. Data on the doctor's record could be evaluated anonymously, with careful effort made to help the public. Retaining public faith is essential for a healthcare system; if a doctor was unable to solve a certain ailment 99 times out of 100, then we can concede that some action has to be taken, albeit on the back-end. Doctors themselves, though, would also understand this, since the intent of the medical profession is to serve the public. They could ensure that the doctor gets the required training for the specific treatment, so that the number of unsatisfied patients is kept at the minimum.

Hence, an ailing patient should not be able to have easy access to their doctor's past records of treating similar patients, as it would not give them a good picture of the doctor's competency.