

# Consultation & Doctor Patient Relationship

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# Consultation

- Takes place when a person who is ill or believes to be ill seeks the advice of a doctor.
- Starts as the patient enters the consultation room.
- Ends when patient leaves
- Very important in family practice as every thing is done during this short period

# Doctor Patient Relationship

- Relationship builds up between doctor and patient
- Starts during the first consultation and gets strengthen during subsequent consultations

# Steps in consultation

## ■ Observe as patient enters

- gate
- mood
- posture
- clothes

- Greet the patient
- Offer a chair
- Make patient comfortable

- Start conversation by asking background information –name
  - age
  - from where
  - occupation

## ■ Ask open ended questions first

- give room for the patient to talk
- come out with important information

- Show you are listening & understanding
  - verbal responses
  - non verbal responses

Observe the patient throughout

- facial expressions
- physical signs related to illness
- posture
- non verbal cues

- Clarify what patient complains of if necessary
- Ask direct questions towards the end of the consultation

- Examination & planning management also part of consultation

# Factors which improve effectiveness of consultation

- Adequate privacy
- Adequate time
- Less disturbances
- Doctor and patient talk the same language
- Good doctor patient relationship

# Barriers to effective consultation

- Inadequate privacy
- Inadequate time
- Disturbances – noises
  - telephone calls
  - other staff

Language problems

Mood of the doctor

Mood of the patient

# Barriers to effective consultation

- Differing gender ,age, ethnic or social background of doctor & patient
- Sensitive issues to address
- Hidden or differing agendas
- Prior difficult meetings
- Lack of trust between dr. & pt.

# Consultation length

- Personality and attitudes of the GP can influence consultation length
- Patients prefer longer consultations
- Increased consultation time can improve outcome

# Beneficial effects of increased consultation time

- Increased Pt. & Dr. Satisfaction
- Improved Dr. – Pt. communication
- Increased identification of psychosocial problems and health promotion
- Decreased reconsultation rates and prescriptions for minor illnesses

# Consultation models

- ❖ Purely medical “organic” model consisting of history, examination, investigation, diagnosis, treatment & follow up not suitable for general practice
- ❖ Consultation should address physical psychological and social aspects  
Consultation in general practice should be patient centered

# Doctor centered model

- Dr. establishes a relationship with the pt.
- Dr. attempts to discover the reason for the pt's attendance
- Dr. conducts verbal and physical examination
- Dr. consider the condition
- Dr. orders treatment & investigation
- Consultation is terminated by Dr.

# Patient centered model

- ❖ Pendleton et al, 1984
- ❖ Define the reason for pt's attendance
- ❖ Consider other problems(continuing problems & at risk factors)
- ❖ Choose an appropriate action for each problem (involves negotiation between dr & pt)
- ❖ Achieved a shared understanding of the problem

- Involve the pt. in management & encourage pt. to accept appropriate responsibility
- Use time & resources appropriately
- Establish and maintain a relationship

# Confidentiality

- Patient expects doctor to maintain professional secrecy or confidentiality

# Outcome of consultation

## ■ Immediate outcome

- change for better in patient's ideas & concerns
- patient feels reassured
- patient understands the problem
- patient agrees to adhere to a management plan
- patient is satisfied with the consultation

- Intermediate outcome
  - compliance with management plan and recovering from illness

- Long term outcome-
  - Change for the better in patient's health
  - Improvement in patient's health understanding