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## What patients want from their doctors

Patients want many things from their doctors, not all of which are possible. Below, however, is a list of things that patients seem to want from their doctor and which should be possible.

- Eye contact—There is nothing worse than walking into a consulting room and not getting any eye contact from the doctor. It happened to me only last week; I knocked on the door, to be greeted with "Come" and to find the doctor sitting looking at his computer screen. He continued to do so while asking why I had come to see him.
- Partnership—Patients want to be people who doctors do things with, not people that doctors do things to. Patients want to be consulted about their condition, their treatment, and how things will progress from the consultation.
- Communication—Communication from doctor to patient and vice versa is the key to a successful consultation. Many patients still feel that they are entering "alien territory" when they go to see their doctor. In many cases they are scared, they don't understand what the doctor is saying, and they are not able to take everything in that they are told. Just as doctors may have

trouble understanding a patient's explanation of symptoms, so patients may have trouble understanding a doctor's explanation of the diagnosis.

- Time—Patients want to spend more time with their doctor: they want time to be able to explain things and have things explained to them. We all know that there is a shortage of doctors, and we know that a doctor's time is valuable. However, if one wish could be granted for patients it would be for more time with their doctor.
- Appointments—Patients want to get to see their doctor within a reasonable time; not weeks, but rather a few days, or, in the case of a person who is unwell, a few hours if possible.

These are just five wishes that we are told on a daily basis by patients. The relationship between a doctor and a patient is special, and one that works well in most cases. It is also a partnership, a partnership that should be valued by doctor and patient.

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