

A recent experience with one of my patients made me realize that there is a common misconception about doctors and health care that needs to be talked about. I was at a health fair not long ago and I had the opportunity to talk to a gentleman who has been suffering from a relatively uncommon condition. The skin on one of his thighs was very pain sensitive. Even a light touch would be very uncomfortable. This condition had been bothering him for some time. He had seen other doctors, including a chiropractor with no benefit. I told him that it sounded like something we could help and that just because he had seen a chiropractor, didn't mean he could not be helped by chiropractic care.

What many people don't realize is that health care is more an art than it is a science. The skill and talent of the doctor is much more important than current medical technology. There are many factors that come into play in every successful health care encounter. Each patient is unique and each condition is unique. Each doctor has a unique set of skills and abilities.

Our highly technological world provides doctors with a variety of specialized tests and imaging studies. Machines and lab tests can't interpret their own results and make clinical decisions. The doctor must use his or her education and intelligence to interpret those test results. Then doctors use their skills and experience to decide on a treatment plan and render that treatment. No two doctors are the same in intelligence, knowledge and skill.

I know an orthopedic surgeon who needs knee replacements himself, but doesn't trust anyone but himself to perform that type of surgery so he continues to suffer. While I think that might be a little extreme, it illustrates my first point - not all doctors are equally skilled.

My second point is that each doctor is unique and each patient is unique. Failure to get a desired outcome may not mean that the doctor's skills are not up to par. It may simply mean that the doctor and the patient may not be a good match for each other. A different doctor/patient match might have an entirely different outcome. That is why we have multiple doctors in our offices so that a patient can try a different one without having to go through the entire evaluation process again.

My patient with the unusual skin pain is now nearly pain free after a month of care and I anticipate full recovery. He had also been experiencing extremely cold feet for some time and after just a few visits his feet are warm again. At first he was hesitant to try chiropractic again, because he didn't have good results the first time. Now he is very glad he decided to try it again.

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