



Patient-Doctor Relationship

ABSTRACT: In Aph 18 of 'Organon of Medicine' Dr Hahnemann says: The totality of symptoms is the sole indication & guide to the physician in choice of an appropriate remedy. The compilation of information from patient and other sources is of utmost importance to discover the similimum. The patient-doctor relationship helps physician to understand patient as a person making finding similimum relatively easy.



Dr G D JAISWAL Professor HOD Organon, Baroda Homoeopathic Medical College, Ex-member CCH, Samarpan Society, Near Raneshwar Mahadev Temple, Vasna Road, Baroda-390020
Tel: 0265-2632086 / 5557282. Mob: 09824237282

Homoeopathy is a patient-oriented science. For homoeopathic prescribing, it is the prescribing totality which is very essential and not the diagnosis of the disease. For this, the homoeopath will need information covering various aspects of life. It is, therefore, extremely necessary to establish doctor-patient relationship as it facilitates the homoeopath to extract information from the patients.

A good history provides the best indicated remedy necessary to bring back the patient to his original state of health.

If a homoeopath wants to have a patient permanently on his records, maintenance of patient-doctor relationship is indispensable. Homoeopath has to make an impression on the patient that they are close to each other. Acquisition of interviewing skills, coupled with good doctor-patient relationship proves most beneficial to gather information from the patient.

Calling the patients by name everytime they visit the clinic, can have hypnotizing effect and pay richest dividends. Asking patient's name everytime they visit gives the impression that the physician is inattentive and disinterested.

AN ILLUSTRATION:

"Reshamaben, how are you today?"

"Reshamaben, did you get sleep yesterday night?"

"Reshamaben, did Ankita (her daughter) trouble you last night?"

This repeated calling by name has a wonderful hypnotic effect of nearness. Very few homoeopaths

realize the value of clinical case records having nicely written preliminary data. Records are more important for developing rapport with the patient than for the income-tax purpose. In clinical case record, the full name of the patient should be written down. Additional inquiries like name of the spouse, number of kids along with their names etc are of tremendous utility in developing rapport.

It might happen that the homoeopath forgets the name of the patient because of his busy schedule. Even if he has forgotten, this should not show it on his face. He should receive his patient with a smiling face and ask him, "How do you feel?" The little time available at this stage should be used to search the name of the patient. Homoeopath can easily give a look on the label of the bottle which the patient is carrying, as the name is written on it. The next question should start,

"Reshamaben, how is your headache?" The patient gets a good feeling- you remember her and so remember her symptoms too.

Some patients can be remembered through their chief complaints. It has been experienced by homoeopaths that some of the patients introduce themselves by their chief complaints. I remember one of my patients who initiated telephonic conversation by telling me, "Sir, I am your patient of IBS calling from my office." The symptoms which look purely functional should be written in the case records. All such symptoms could be asked individually in the next visits. For example, "How is the tingling of left foot which you reported last time?" The



patient will be pleased to know that you have remembered his symptom. If this symptom cannot be cured, the homoeopath would share the bad luck of the patient.

Homoeopath should impress the housewife. She is the one who influences her husband and coaxes him to see the homoeopath and not any other physician. She is the one who stays at home and while filing water or drying clothes, goes on jabbering with all the neighbours- talking good about the homoeopath and thus provides free publicity. To please a housewife an interest must be shown in her children. "Reshmaben, does Ankita still trouble you with bed wetting?" and establish a rapport of inestimable value. *(Editor: The late Dr Bhatia shared this unique ability along with Dr Jaiswal which played an immense role in his large practice).*

As far as men are concerned, to get their confidence, it is desirable to ask them the details of sex life. Sizeable numbers have sex problem which they do not disclose even to near and dear ones. After the patient gives all these details to his homoeopath, he develops a peculiar nearness to him. The things which were in his mind for years together, he has now blurted out to sympathetic homoeopath and hence he feels relieved to a great extent. In reality, most sex problems are functional and, therefore, with proper counseling and rightly selected remedies, they can be brought to their normal sex life.

Always call children by their names. Remove their fear by loving them. Children praise their doctors and do free advertisement for their physician. Most children prefer taking sweet homoeopathic pills rather than bitter allopathic drugs and so it is easy to develop adequate rapport with them. These children will insist their parents take them to the physician who dispenses sweet medicines with love. They are usually reluctant to visit allopaths whom they describe as 'Injectionwala' doctor. They are eager to meet a homoeopath, who not only gives them sweet pills but greets them with love and affection. Such homoeopaths are lovingly addressed by the children as 'Chocolatewala' doctor. Some eminent physician has very rightly said, a homoeopath

must marry early and must have children as early as possible. Parenthood will enable them to understand the anxiety of parents whose child is sick.

As far as possible, talk to the patient in his own language. However, broken the patient's language a homoeopath might use, the patient feels nearer to him. Talking in Marathi will impress a patient who is Maharashtrian, and talking in a typical Hindi will have tremendous impact on the patient who is from the north India and so on.

Attend social functions and religious festivals of the patient if convenient. Birthday and anniversary celebrations have become common nowadays.

Conveying best wishes on such auspicious occasions will help the homoeopath to develop the dependable rapport with the patients. Young patients who are going to appear for important examinations or interviews must be given best wishes for their better future and success in life. The families about to leave for tour should be conveyed best wishes for happy journey. Apparently, all such things look small but they go a long way in winning the heart of the patients.

Homoeopath should talk to the patient with confidence. If a homoeopath is reluctant while making the statements about his health, it is considered as a sign of incompetency. A homoeopath who gives two to three opinions for the same patient fails to earn the confidence of the patient. No patient would ever like to visit such incompetent homoeopath. At the same time, a homoeopath must not project himself as over-confident physician as this kind of physician is not easily trusted by the patient. Developing confidence is the matter which is directly related to knowledge and experience. Dr Hahnemann has clearly stated the requisites to acquire the knowledge in paragraph 3 of Organon of medicine. One who has got sound knowledge can be appropriately termed as 'proficient homoeopath'. Thus, a homoeopath who is proficient talks confidently with his patients and in turn succeeds in developing the doctor-patient relationship.

The dedicated and hard working homoeopath is known to have relatively high success rate. The patient who is cured of his ailments develops



unshakeable confidence in his homoeopath. This confidence will generate rapport between the two. Some patients simply seek advice from their homoeopathic physician in matters related to health. The patients who are benefited by the instructions given to them feel highly obliged to the homoeopath.

Frankness is another quality the homoeopath should possess. A homoeopath who frankly admits his own

limitations and those of the science is liked by the patients. and will be thanked with sense of gratitude for giving crystal clear opinions.

Every patient expects from his homoeopath that none of his personal and private matter should ever be leaked. So assure all patients that their entire narration will always remain confidential. Maintaining confidentiality of the clinical case record helps in generating the rapport with the patient. ○

Skilled Listening

ABSTRACT: A Homoeopath can't afford to suffer from 'The Disease of not Listening'. He should listen his patient attentively with interest and unprejudiced mind (Aph-6, 83, 84) to extract information of Homoeopathic significance. Skilled listening facilitates him to constitute 'Effective Prescribing Totality' in order to select 'Homoeopathic Specific' for each patient (Aph-147).



Dr G D JAISWAL Professor HOD Organon, Baroda Homoeopathic Medical College, Ex-member CCH, Samarpan Society, Near Raneshwar Mahadev Temple, Vasna Road, Baroda-390020
Tel: 0265-2632086 / 5557282. Mob: 09824237282

Listening is the forgotten skill of communication. Most people think listening is a good thing, but it confers no benefits. To listen means to hear with thoughtful attention. It demands a very alert mind and considerable concentration. It means to pay careful, alert, watchful and mindful heed to the speaker and to what he or she is saying, and pays, huge benefit to the Homoeopath.

A homoeopath should remember the Turkish proverb: 'Listening requires more intelligence than speaking.'

THE BENEFITS OF BEING A GOOD LISTENER

1. Listening is a principle way of learning. A homoeopathic interviewer gathers information mainly through two organs- eyes and ears. The 'write-up' and inferences of various specialized and super specialized investigations, which can be read, seems at first to be a far superior method of receiving information than listening. But there are advan-

tages that go with receiving information through listening as opposed to reading. Through listening, an interviewer obtains information which cannot be written down. A knowledgeable talker will often select those facts that give an essence of his illness to his interviewer, to help him understand the evolution of his sickness. Each patient is a potential teacher, provided we can find out what to learn from him.

2. Listening is a way of helping patients. The greatest human need is to have someone to listen, in times of stress, anxiety, transition or perplexity, especially a sympathetic listener more than an adviser. Improving ones capability as listener actually saves time for both: The interviewer and the patient. Never underestimate the good which can be done by simply listening.

The patient who is mentally disturbed will get an opportunity to 'vomit out' all his feelings to a sympathetic and humanitarian listener. The homoeopath



is probably the first person who has shown willingness to listen to him through words and gestures. After giving the complete description of his suppressed feelings, he feels unloaded and light. Listening of this category with patience facilitates 'Mental catharsis' which has got tremendous therapeutic value in the process of treatment.

3. By listening, a homoeopath creates a listener. You tend to receive what you give, and to give what you receive. If you give listening, you may receive listening. If you talk, you get talk back.

Being a good listener benefits an interviewer in more than one ways. Since the homoeopath has listened attentively, the patient feels obligated to listen to every instruction and suggestion. To extract maximum advantages, the first step, paradoxically, is to become more aware of what constitutes poor listening in yourself as well as others.

THE DISEASE OF NOT LISTENING

People often confuse listening with hearing. But 'I hear what you say' is not the same as 'I am listening to you.' The later implies more than reception of sounds, more even than reception of the message. Most homoeopathic interviewers suffer from, 'The disease of not listening.' Here are some symptoms in the syndrome of poor listening

1. Selective listening.

Selective listening means that an interviewer is programmed to turn a deaf ear to certain information. A homoeopath, who is prejudiced, would prefer listening only that information which would support him in selection of his favourite remedy. He will pathetically miss the valuable information which would be actually required for the selection of the similimum.

2. Persistent interrupting.

Persistent interrupting is the most obvious badge of the bad listener. Too many interruptions break the chain of thought of the narrator who will subsequently be unable to recall his ideas in precisely the same manner which he would have said first.

3. Switching off.

It is difficult for an interviewer to think two things at the same time. During conversation, some inner

agenda gains precedence over what is being said to him by the patient and, therefore, his listening gets badly affected. His attention is given to an inner television screen. This kind of poor listening has a monkey on his mental shoulder. There is disconnected chatter going into his inner ear- that festival, what my teacher said, did I switch my car lights off_ _ _ __. Emotions can project colour pictures on his inner screen and turn up the sound. Then - farewell to listening.

4. Succumbing to external distractions.

Uncomfortable chairs, noise, heat or cold, sunlight or gloom are the situations which can distract the mind of a listener. Some eminent educationalist have said, "Stronger the power of distracting externals, the poor the quality of listening."

5. Evading the difficult.

Such is the addiction to obtain clear, simple and vivid data that sizable numbers of homoeopathic interviewers have a low tolerance for anything that threatens to be difficult, long and dull. It is only the sincere listener who follows the path which is tortuous and uphill. The faint hearted or lazy listener gives up at the first obstacle. It would be difficult to interview certain patients as they are not as communicative as the homoeopath want them to be. Also, some of the areas described by the patient would not be easy to understand at first attempt. Only a homoeopath willing to reach his destination would undertake the difficult path to understand his patient as a person.

THE SKILLS OF LISTENING

The fact that man is born with two eyes and two ears, but only 1 tongue suggests- look and listen twice as much as you speak. The homoeopathic interviewer should make all the possible endeavours to master the skills of listening to make him a good or very good listener. It is hard to move from satisfactory to good, and harder to progress from good to very good while excellent eludes all but those with a special gift and special application.

LISTENING WITH INTEREST

Attitude is the most important deciding factor be-



tween the accurately and poorly taken cases. It is of immense importance that the interviewer should be interested and concerned with the welfare of the patient. He cannot afford to be a disinterested listener. No intelligent patient will like talking for any length of time to a 'Wall.' A receptive attitude with minimum projection proves highly beneficial. This interest may be conveyed by a few unobtrusive questions posed from time to time during the patient's narrative and by listening with great care and attention. Even non-verbal feedback like occasional nods or smiles would convey the same and motivate the patient to provide the information needed; to pour out his inner feelings and provide that elusive wealth of information.

The symptoms provided by the patient should be accepted with interest but without judgment. Avoid advice and moral injunctions. If the patient feels judged, he will withdraw and refuse to disclose the information of greater homoeopathic utility. But today unfortunately, the 'Listening physician' has become a rare commodity.

LISTENING WITH AN UNPREJUDICED MIND

Signs and symptoms are the outwardly reflected manifestations of the disease, that is, of the affection of the vital force. And represent the disease in its whole extent. They form the true and only conceivable portrait of the disease which helps the homoeopath to individualise the case and point to the curative remedy.

The prejudiced physician miserably fails to get the true totality of the case. One observes what one expects to see. The expectations are determined by the prejudices he holds. The errors of non-observation and mal-observation are the outcome of prejudiced observation.

Listening with an unprejudiced mind provides the patient the deserved comfort and freedom of ex-

pression. It facilitates the interviewer to perceive the patient as a person. Some interviewers try to catalogue symptoms into interpretations based upon previous experience or upon the knowledge of *Materia Medica*. A homoeopath should be skeptical about any habitual or unconscious attempt to pigeon hole the expression of the patient into preconceived categories.

All this is excellently described by Dr Hahnemann in aphorism 100: ".....it is quite immaterial whether or not something similar has ever appeared in the world before under the same or any other name. The novelty or peculiarity of a disease of that kind makes no difference in the mode of examining or treating it, as the physician must any way regard the pure picture of every prevailing disease as if it were something new and unknown, and investigate it thoroughly for itself, if he desire to practice medicine in a real and radical manner, never substituting conjecture for actual observation, never taking for granted that the case of disease before him is already wholly or partially known, but always carefully examining it in all its phases."

This point is further elaborated by Dr Kent, one of the finest homoeopathic prescribers ever, who humbly confesses how readily prejudices tend to creep into the process. In the paragraph given below, he comments on the above aphorism of Hahnemann.

"Keep that in your mind, underscore it half a dozen times with red ink, paint it on the wall, and put an index finger to it. One of the most important things is to keep out of the mind, in an examination of the case, some other case that has appeared to be similar. If this is not done, the mind will be prejudiced in spite of your best endeavors. I have to fight that with every fresh case I come to. I have to labour to keep myself from thinking about things I have cured like that before, because it would prejudice my mind."



**The most dangerous pariah.....A gossip
The world's most incredible computer.....The brain**