



OPINION

Patient-centered Care: Transforming the Landscape of Internal Medicine

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INTRODUCTION

Patient Centered Care (PCC) has emerged as a cornerstone of modern healthcare, emphasizing the importance of viewing patients as active participants in their own health management rather than passive recipients of care. This approach is particularly relevant in internal medicine, where the complexity and chronicity of conditions often require a collaborative, personalized approach to treatment. By prioritizing the needs, preferences, and values of patients, internists can foster better health outcomes, improve patient satisfaction, and enhance the overall quality of care. Patient-centered care is a holistic approach that involves respecting and responding to individual patient preferences, needs, and values, ensuring that patient values guide all clinical decisions. Internal medicine deals with a wide range of adult health issues, often involving complex and chronic conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, and heart disease. These conditions not only require medical management but also necessitate lifestyle changes, adherence to treatment regimens, and ongoing monitoring.

DESCRIPTION

Implementing PCC in internal medicine can significantly enhance the management of these chronic diseases by involving patients in their care plans and encouraging active participation. By understanding and addressing the patient's individual circumstances and challenges, internists can help patients make sustainable changes that improve their health outcomes. Effective communication is a cornerstone of PCC. Internists must ensure that patients fully understand their diagnoses, treatment options, and the implications of their health decisions. This involves not only providing clear and comprehensive information but also listening actively to patients' concerns and questions. Shared decision-making, where doctors and patients work together to make health decisions, is a critical aspect of this communication. For instance, in managing hypertension, an internist might present various treatment options, including lifestyle changes and medications, discussing the benefits

and potential side effects of each. By involving the patient in the decision-making process, the physician can help the patient choose a treatment plan that aligns with their values and lifestyle, increasing the likelihood of adherence and success. For example, patients with chronic pain conditions may benefit from a multidisciplinary approach that includes pain management specialists, physical therapists, and mental health professionals. By addressing both the physical and emotional aspects of chronic pain, internists can help patients achieve a better quality of life. PCC recognizes the importance of involving family members and support networks in the care process. Family members often play a crucial role in supporting patients' health management, from assisting with medication adherence to providing emotional support. Internists should encourage the involvement of family members, with the patient's consent, to create a supportive environment that fosters better health outcomes. For example, involving family members in education sessions about heart failure management can help ensure that patients receive the necessary support at home to adhere to their treatment plans, recognize early signs of complications, and make necessary lifestyle adjustments.

CONCLUSION

Patient-centered care represents a transformative approach in internal medicine, emphasizing the importance of treating patients as whole persons with unique needs, preferences, and values. By fostering better communication, emotional support, and collaborative decision-making, PCC can lead to improved health outcomes, greater patient satisfaction, and a more effective and compassionate healthcare system. As internal medicine continues to evolve, embracing patient-centered care will be essential in meeting the diverse needs of patients and enhancing the quality of care provided.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Author declares that there are no conflicts of interest.