

## Humanity, does it matter in health care?

Humanity is defined as understanding and kindness towards other people. Do medical practitioners need to have humanitarian approach towards their patients? It is my observation that it is the fundamental gap in health care delivery today in the world. This week, I just want to share some extracts from various sources to provoke the question of *Humanity in Healthcare*.

At its core, healthcare is about one thing: treating and healing people. Too often, that mission gets lost in a sea of paperwork, complicated systems and workflows, and overworked providers. Rather than viewing the hospital or doctor's office as a safe haven, for too many patients, the healthcare system evokes thoughts of annoyances, fears, inconveniences, even judgment. With a complicated care process and even more complicated billing, for many, the difficulties of just receiving care outweigh the benefits of care itself. .... These conversations stifle the underpinnings of what care is about: the people seeking help, those working to provide it, and those aiming to empower successful care. Let's bring back the humanity in healthcare.

*Becka Brown. Refocusing on the humanity in healthcare Oct 1, 2018. [Blog at becka.brown@validic.com](mailto:becka.brown@validic.com)*

Burnout is not a new phenomenon in healthcare, but its rising prevalence indicates a system in crisis. The consequences of this crisis are not only important to the individual doctors, nurses, and other care team members on the front lines of delivery systems, but also to the quality of care delivered to patients and their loved ones. All of these impacts inform the economic stability of our care systems and the broader economy. The healthcare system is at a critical crossroads. Just as patient care is shifting from a model of disease treatment and "sick care" to one of prevention and population management, so too must the system shift its approach to the emotional, physical, and spiritual well-being of healthcare team members. The new model must aim not merely at burnout prevention, but also at supporting the emotional thriving and emotional resilience of team members through human-centered leadership, creating a positive culture, and implementing processes and technology that enable care team members to achieve their highest healing potential.

National Taskforce for Humanity in Healthcare Position Paper: The Business Case for Humanity in Healthcare April 2018

Humanity in healthcare rests on an awareness of patients as human beings first, patients second. The good physician treats the disease; the great physician treats the patient who has the disease.

*Father of modern medicine. Sir William Osler (1849-1919).*

Does it have to come down to a choice between compassion *or* competence? Can't we have both?

*O'Connor, ME. Humanity in Healthcare: Seeing the Person in the 'Patient'. Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland. People at the Centre. Alliance 2017.*

.... We've vastly improved our ability to care since then, but in some ways we've lost an appreciation for that aspect of a clinician-patient relationship. My fervent hope is that once we get this right, we'll actually be returning, somewhat, to a place where it's that person-to-person relationship that's the most valuable part of our day.

*Chris Derienzo. Can technology restore humanity to healthcare? Humanity and Technology in Medicine: Antithetic or Symbiotic? Health care IT News. Dec 2018.*

*Let Hope Grow* – An exhibition: Through a series of engaging pieces and thoughtful curation, *Let Hope Grow* importantly address and promotes advocacy around early childhood disability. Visitors leave with greater understanding of the programme, and hope for the lives of the individuals within it.

*Paroma Guha. Humanity towards others. Lancet 3 June 2019.*

... We run experiments on the best ways to document visits, collaborate on team-based care, provide decision support, and automate the most manual parts of care. Software should free health care workers to focus on the most important thing: deeply caring for the patient.

“To most physicians, my illness is a routine incident in their rounds, while for me it’s the crisis of my life. I would feel better if I had a doctor who at least perceived this incongruity”

*Anatole Broyard (Former New York Times critic) (1).*

How do we go about this amalgamation of humanities training in medical schools?

- Contextualizing a patient’s clinical condition in the background of his socio-demographics, family and culture
- Developing personal reflection and judgment which can sharpen, cultivate, or revive students’ curiosity, and enhances intellectual and relational capacities
- Encouraging imagination to gain a better understanding of how others perceive and experience things
- Offering specific ways to improve the quality of the therapeutic relationship by creating explicit links between the first three goals and day-to-day medical practice

*Louis-Courvoisier M. Medical humanities: a new undergraduate teaching program at the University of Geneva School of Medicine, Switzerland. Acad Med. 2003;78(10):1043–7.*

Machine learning algorithms may be maturing by the day, but there are some things they'll never be good at. Humans have cornered the market on three critical skills that are at the core of good healthcare:

- Empathy. The ability to discerning what another person is feeling and thinking, and responding in an appropriate way, goes to the heart of what healthcare is.
- Creative and collaborative problem-solving. The problems are too complicated to do alone. What makes teams successful? The social sensitivity of the team members, their ability to read one another.
- Storytelling. Good analysis of a lot of data is exactly what the technology is doing better all the time. But if you want to change people's mind and inspire them to action ... tell them a story.

*Geoff Colvin. As technology proliferates, human factors matter more than ever for healthcare. HealthcareITNews. May 15, 2019.*