Patient Empowerment: a characteristic of General Practice/Family Medicine

Ernesto Mola – ASSIMEFAC - Italy

Interdisciplinary Scientific Association of both Family and Community Medicine
Specific problems solving skills

Comprehensive approach

Community orientation

Primary care management

Holistic modelling

Wonca

Early undifferentiated stages

Acute and chronic health problems

Promotes health and wellbeing

Care coordination and advocacy

First contact, open access, all health problems

Physical, psychological, social, cultural and existential

Clinical tasks

Communication with patients

Management of the practice

Attitude

Science

Context

European Definition of Family Medicine:
Core Competencies and Characteristics
(Wonca 2002/2011)

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Swiss College of Primary Care Medicine / U. Grueninger
www.kollegium.ch
Leonardo Project

*Disease and care management of chronic conditions*

Feasibility and effectiveness of a disease and care management model in the primary health care system for patients with heart failure and diabetes (Project Leonardo).
“Education for Liberation”*

✓ Banking Approach

Teachers pour a body of information into ignorant learners

✓ Problem-Posing Approach

Learners are respected as equals and educators work with them to help evaluate their personal situation and experiences in order to support the creation of their own plans of action.

*Educacao como practica de libertade
Education aimed to enhance critical consciousness requires active listening, open dialogue, and nurturing, since the educational goal is not simply to provide information, but to empower individuals to define problems, find solutions for themselves, and effectively cope with the emotional impact of adjustment and changes.

* Freire Paulo: Pedagogia de opresido
Promoting Empowerment

The Chronic Care Model and Innovative Care for Chronic Conditions (ICCC), edited by WHO propose that "an essential ingredient of effective treatment is the partnership between the patient and health professionals because it offers the opportunity to empower patients to become active in managing their health".

* Wagner EH, Davis C, Schaefer J et al. A survey of leading chronic disease management programs: are they consistent with the literature? Manag Care Q 1999; 7:56-66
Compliance vs. Empowerment

Compliance

“You have to do what I tell you”

- Authoritative
- Reduces patient autonomy
- Constrains freedom of choice

Empowerment

“Let’s decide together what the best care is for your conditions”

- An agreement
- Supports promotion of self-management
- Considers patients’ perspectives
### Approach to compliance is effective for acute illnesses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Short-duration; usually resolvable condition which occurs at some stage during the life of the patient</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abrupt onset and short-term</td>
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<tr>
<td>Usually do not produce consequences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rapidly progressive, sometime severe</td>
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<tr>
<td>Need for prompt and/or drastic action</td>
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<tr>
<td>The patient has no experience of the disease</td>
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<tr>
<td>Short healing treatment</td>
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<td>Has a predictable course</td>
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Patient can only give an informed consent and then obey to the prescriptions of the experts.
### Approach to empowerment for chronic conditions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Long-term condition which affects patient’s life</td>
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<tr>
<td>Permanent and progressive</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Produce consequences, or sequelae that impact on the individual’s quality life</td>
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<td>Has a pattern of recurrence, or deterioration, not reversible</td>
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<tr>
<td>Requires a step-by-step approach</td>
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<tr>
<td>The patient becomes expert in the way the disease affects his/her own life</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chronic treatment requires ongoing medical attention</td>
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<td>Changes slowly and repeatedly over time</td>
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Patient actually manages his/her condition as well as his/her life.
The patient is the true manager of his or her well being.

The question is not whether patients will manage their diseases, but how they will manage.

The General Practice is in a strategic position to help patients:
- Increase their power
- Increase their confidence

European Definition of GP/FM

✓ Develops a person-centred approach, orientated to the individual, his or her family, and their community

✓ Has a unique consultation process, which establishes a relationship over time, through effective communication between doctor and patient

✓ Is responsible for the provision of longitudinal continuity of care as determined by needs of the patient

✓ Promotes health and well-being both by appropriate and effective intervention

✓ Deals with health problems in their physical, psychological, social, cultural and existential dimensions
The General Practice is:
- the most suitable setting for promoting patient empowerment and self-management education

Because of its widespread presence, Family Medicine can:
- deliver support to the patient empowerment to the totality of patients and communities
A definition of Empowerment

“Empowerment is a process by which people gain mastery over their lives”

A definition of Patient Empowerment

“Patient empowerment is educational process, based on a productive interaction and mutual trust between patient and health professionals, aimed to support patients to increase critical consciousness concerning their chronic conditions, cope with the emotional impact, define and pursue the personal action plans to manage their health.”
“When people understand their condition, they act in accordance with what they have understood.

The quality of actions corresponds to the level of consciousness.

If comprehension will be critical or predominantly critical then the actions will be critical, aware.”

Paulo Freire