

Abstract

Objective

The objective of this research was to examine in which way compliance in the elderly is influenced by the doctor-patient relationship.

Background

The communication between the doctor and the patient plays an important role in the doctor-patient relationship. There are two kinds of relationships: the paternalistic relationship and the partnership. The communication styles in these relationships vary. The communication in the relationship contributes in many ways to the improvement of patient outcomes. A frequently used outcome indicator is compliance. Compliance in the elderly can be influenced by various factors. Most of these relate to the attitude of the patient. The communication style affects the patient and the patient's attitude and therefore it indirectly influences compliance.

Method

For this research in-depth interviews have been held with three doctors and six patients with a minimum age of 55 years. The interviews were semi-structured.

Results

The patients indicated that they were very satisfied with the relationship with their doctor. The doctor spent enough time with them, gave sufficient information and gave the patients the opportunity to participate in the consult. The patients indicated that they trusted their doctor. Five of the six patients preferred a partnership and one patient preferred a paternalistic relationship. The current way the doctor provided care corresponded to what the patients understood as good care. Some of the patients indicated that they adhered to their treatment, while others admitted that they didn't always follow doctor's orders. The reasons for low compliance varied from fear of possible side effects to laziness.

Conclusion

The type of doctor-patient relationship did not seem to influence compliance in the elderly respondents in this study. The patient's satisfaction and the way the patient perceives the doctor seems more important. The persuasiveness of the doctor also proved to be of importance. Finally the attitude of the patient compared to compliance was a relevant factor.