

## POSTER ABSTRACTS

15th Annual HMO Research Network Conference  
April 26-29, 2009 – Danville, PA

11:30 am–Noon & 1:30–2:00 pm  
Monday, April 27th • Lobby

PS1 – 32

### Doctors' Role In Their Patient's Healing: Practices Of The Highest Performing Physicians By Patient Survey

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**Background:** The MD-Patient Communication Study aims were to improve the best practice communication behaviors of physicians during outpatient clinic visits and to collect physician perspectives of communication behaviors. Researchers have consistently found the top predictors of overall patient satisfaction are quality of the physician-patient relationship and contributing communications. There is limited understanding however, of the range of specific behaviors in the interaction associated with positive and negative patient perceptions and reactions.

**Methods:** In phase 1, we conducted a naturalistic, observational study of 55 Kaiser Permanente Primary Care physician-patient visits using videotape recordings, and incorporating patient and physician reactions to the tape. The physicians, who practiced in Los Angeles and Honolulu, spanned the three strata of high, medium, and low historical patient satisfaction scores. In phase 2, a standardized six-question set was posed in semi-structured, 60-minute interviews to 77 of the highest-performing physicians on this patient survey, including 20 of the highest performers (top 5%) from the LA and Honolulu groups and 42 and 15, respectively, of the highest performing physicians in Portland and Oakland. These interviews were audio taped with permission, transcribed and coded for patterns.

**Results:** This abstract addresses the 4th question: What role do you feel you play in your patients' healing? Do you think you, as a doctor, contribute to your patients' healing through non-technical, non-physical, or non-scientific ways? All physicians agreed but varied in their role. Representative quotes: Giving people the confidence to go through something. People feel better coming in and seeing/talking to you. People realizing they have the power to heal themselves their involvement is essential. Our relationship: Interpersonal connection is so powerful. The art of medicine is the art of healing. These narratives provide deep, coherent learning about physicians' role in healing: relationship, education, empowerment, emotion, personal connection, hope.

**Conclusions:** With primary care in crisis nationally, and specialists increasingly procedure-focused, understanding physicians' role in patients' healing, especially as it creates high patient satisfaction, is of great importance to sustaining the highest quality medical care and service.