



MAILBOX

The loneliness of the sufferer

Despite progress and changes in human society, medicine is a romantic profession. No one can replace the human relationship between doctor and patient.

What walks into the surgery is not a diseased stomach, an inflamed blood vessel, an off-beat heart, a high blood pressure reading, a rheumatic focus in a joint: it is a person, with a person's problems, doubts, fears and hopes. And we see in those eyes a desire to discover the acute phase of a diagnosis, a prognosis for good or for ill.

We must treat the anxiety involved in any illness, not merely through simple application of a treatment. We must inspire hope in our patients, feel with them, suffer with them, die with them. Patients should see us doctors as people who will give of ourselves, cure them, relieve them. It is this union between patient and doctor which lies at the crux of healthcare, which can achieve miracles. Ties of communication from one person to another, a doctor who says with a glance, with a hand: "in your suffering, in your fear, in your loneliness, I am by your side".

The human examination of a patient uncovers such complete and intriguing details which could never be provided by our modern electronic apparatus or test tubes. "The cordial, friendly, confidential human relationships which used to exist between doctor and patient cannot be replaced, as they also represent a factor in treatment," says Dr Nourse of the Hague.

Despite the increasing importance of teamwork, with only a very slight increase in of individual responsibilities, Hippocratic medicine dominates the profession. "There are no illnesses,

but ill people". What is at stake are not the muscles, nerves, bones, bacilli and viruses, but the great miracle of dreams, of feelings, of hope and of fears. For a doctor, a patient is a clinical record, but also a person suffering.

Saint Paul, in his Second Epistle to the Corinthians, says: "You are in our hearts to die and live with you". And so doctors suffer and die a little with each person who falls ill and suffers, and feel joy as each patient they have treated regains their health.

Among all the issues of care, the loneliness of sufferers dominates the field of medicine. Those whose faith is placed in doctors who reach out their hands, look them in the eye, are not too busy to listen and dedicate all their science to assisting a human being in pain.

Dr Francisco Ruiz de la Cueta,
Seville
ASISA doctor
Member of the Spanish
Association of Author Doctors



It is with great pleasure that I write to wish you the best of health and to thank you for the wonderful material in | [compartir](#) |. I enjoy the way in which you deal with health issues, and find the articles very useful in my work with the elderly. Please do keep it up. Your magazine encourages us to live a healthier life, learning a little more about the amazing universe which is the human body.

Carmen R. García Fumero
Placetas, Villa Clara, Cuba

I am a dedicated reader of your magazine, to which my husband has been subscribing for some years. I am a graduate of Stomatological Care and have worked at my local Stomatology Clinic for 27 years. I read your article about torticollis, and was particularly interested in the treatment involving painkillers, anti-inflammatories and muscle relaxants, as I also suffer from this complaint. I have had X-rays taken and have been diagnosed with cervical arthrosis. My elder son was also born with the condition, and received treatment from the age of four months.

Mabel Morales Cepero
San Antonio de los Baños,
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The Espriu Foundation would like to express its thanks to all those individuals whose donations, often made anonymously, help us to spread the word about health care co-operativism, and make it possible for | [compartir](#) | to be distributed free of charge to all readers.