

Plants, Relationship and Blood Clots

Again SA Family Practice in this issue is able to reflect some of the breadth that a generalist clinician has to deal with in the course of a day. Morris and Mdlalose¹ discuss their findings with regard to Isihlambezo and its possible impact on the newborn child. Henbest² reviews the literature on measuring the doctor-patient relationship. Irving³ and Kirkby⁴ deal with sports injuries.

As is clear from the patients presented by Irving, it is essential to have some depth as well as breadth for excellence in Family Practice. A lot of uneasiness and uncertainty is generated by these requirements for good practice. It is especially in the area of the doctor-patient-relationship that a lot of this uncertainty can be dealt with and remedied. Having some self understanding as well as an understanding of the person of the patient and why they have come to see you, are prerequisites for a successful doctor-patient interaction. We are therefore grateful to Henbest² for the review of measurements of this vital function. When we can look at our interactions reliably and measure it, we have a tool to show various important things.

We can now demonstrate a connection between what goes on between doctor and patient and various clinical outcomes. We now no longer only have to believe, as we intuitively know that relationship matters. It is also an indispensable tool in the training of undergraduate students and doctors. It gives us a measure of where we are on the spectrum of relationships. It helps us to monitor progress in training toward more productive and rewarding relationships.

Uncertainty can be faced by both the

doctor and patient in an open and trusting relationship where there is no longer a need for the doctor to be omnipotent and where both can take their appropriate share of responsibility. In such a situation the impossible requirement of competence in almost infinite depth and breadth can be addressed.



References

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4. Kirkby R. Kirkby's Klinical Kwiz. Rugby fingers. *S Afr Fam Pract* 1991; 12: 186-8.