Doctors Must Lead The Way For Healthcare Change

Recently New Yorker staff writers and best-selling authors Malcolm Gladwell and Atul Gawande addressed the question of whether the problem in health care is that patients are too reliant on doctors and don't have the ability to make decisions. In reading between the lines, is that the reason health care is not affordable and care not commoditized or consumer driven like other industries?

At a conference for America's Health Insurance Plans, Gladwell argued that patients or consumers have been unable to be more empowered because doctors, as the intermediary, held the power of knowledge much the same way chauffeurs did for the early days of the automobile and Xerox technicians did in the early days of photocopying. A person was needed to guide and assist the individual to get the job done. At some point, however, the technology became simpler. People began to drive their own cars and make their own photocopies. The mystique of the chauffeur and technician was lifted. Now everyone could drive. Everyone could make photocopies.

Is it possible that for health care and the health care system, which for many people is a system they interact with rarely and in an area (health / illness) where the uncertainty and stakes many be too "high," that individuals willingly to defer the responsibility to someone else? Gladwell hints that might be a possibility.

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