

Don't Overwhelm Patients With Unnecessary Detail

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It is not an easy time to be a physician in the United States. Attempt to order an expensive test for a patient and an insurance company is likely to second guess your decision. Try upholding the bottom line for your medical practice and the government will probably start questioning whether you are overcharging for your services. To make matters worse, even patients are getting into the act, with an increasing number of them embracing their role as “empowered patients” to remind you that it is they who are the decision makers of last resort, not their physicians.

But there is a simple way for physicians to reclaim at least this last bit of power, a straightforward method of reclaiming their role as the final word in medical decision making; they need to do such a thorough job of informing patients about their medical alternatives—going into unrelenting detail about each risk and benefit of each and every treatment alternative, sparing no medical detail no matter how inconsequential—until bewildered patients have no choice but to ask their doctor for advice.

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