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WORDS are Powerful!

The Placebo Effect is well known. Back in the 1980's, people often referred to patients who responded to placebo as having symptoms 'all in their head'. Basically meaning that symptoms were 'made up'. The Spontaneous Remission project contains thousands of cases documented in hundreds of medical journals where spontaneous remission of a disease or illness occurred. In the decades since that time, more in-depth study of the placebo effect has been taking place. In some studies participants KNEW they were receiving placebo, in others they did not. In the famous Blackpool, England placebo study a very key ingredient to placebo was potentially revealed: time spent with the patient.

It has been well documented that authority, trust and environment play a role in the suggestibility and belief of the patient. But what the Blackpool, England study showed was that time with the patient was a key factor in the control and study groups. So not only is a physician's authority and belief a treatment will work important, but the time they spend listening and explaining to the patient.

Equally important to understand is the Nocebo Effect. Nocebo occurs when someone of trust either states a treatment is not believed to be effective or have lasting effect. It can also occur if the physician or practitioner is viewed as 'untrustworthy' in the patient's eyes. A best friend or family member can also be a powerful source of nocebo.

Many times in an effort to be truthful and transparent, physicians and practitioners unknowingly create nocebo. When insurance dictates a path other than the one a physician has found more effective and the physician prescribes a treatment and states something like "I usually don't find this effective, but your insurance says we must do this first" potentially unravels benefit a patient could receive, however small. This creates disbelief in the patient that treatments are effective and then the patient's own belief system begins to create nocebo.

Another time nocebo is innocently introduced is when a physician or other practitioner introduces potential illness or symptoms when there is no diagnostic reason to have the patient observe for them. When patients begin to 'look for symptoms', often they will find them if for no other reason than worrying and stress creating a similar problem.

It is necessary to educate patients for warning signs indicating and advance or worsening of an illness or disease they have. That is what we as healthcare providers are supposed to do. But our words do have power. And just by being in the healthcare environment or in company of trusted friends and family suggestibility increases. This increases potential placebo and nocebo effect. Use your words wisely.

You can find detailed information on the Spontaneous Remission project at: <https://noetic.org/research/spontaneous-remission-bibliography-project/>