

# SPECIAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS /CHILDREN

Ruba M Jaber

Family Medicine consultant,  
Women and child's health specialist  
Assistant professor family medicine



# CHILDREN

- ◉ Working with children offers rewards, but nobody can deny that it is also a very difficult task. Although children may suffer from similar medical problems like the adults, their management during the medical encounter requires special attention. Some doctors may even consider these consultations very challenging in the sense that communication with children may bring along more issues.





# PARENTS ARE THERE TO HELP

- ◉ First and foremost, it is very difficult to communicate with children and learn directly from them what is bothering them. It is one of the reasons for which parents are expected to be part of the medical consultation. Also, doctors may find it very difficult to explain or to use medical language with young children. Likewise, children may more easily experience feelings of anxiety during these consultations, therefore the presence of the parents may reassure them and make them feel more comfortable.

# NOT ALWAYS PARENTS HELP...

- ◉ In the absence of the parents, children may have unexpected reactions. However this does not mean that the presence of the parents will always facilitate the doctor's job in the management of the child. Parents may be overwhelmed by the situation the child is in and, depending, of course, upon the severity of the medical problem / procedure. Therefore when it comes to dealing with children during the medical encounter, special attention should be paid and doctors should be very well trained in order to be able to face all the problems that may come along.

# UNDERSTANDING FAMILY DYNAMICS AND CONFLICTS

- ◉ Child abuse...
- ◉ Munchausen by proxy syndrome (MBPS)...
- ◉ Over protective parents

# TECHNIQUES

- ◉ doctors have to make sure that the dialogue with the child is at the child's cognitive level and corresponds to his / her developmental changes. As it is for adults, doctors have to check regularly whether what they said has been understood.

- Studies show that if children are explained the procedures they will be going through and understand what is going to happen to them, they will be less anxious. Such explanations will definitely improve the doctor-patient relationship.

# THE ROOM

- ◉ Toys in the consultation and waiting room is important, try to have different forms of toys, this will help :
- ◉ Alleviate anxiety of the kid
- ◉ Help you assess developmental progress of the child
- ◉ Colors of the furniture and the walls also important.





- ◉ Talking with preschool-aged children, on the other hand, has its challenges as these category of patients “have not developed a theory of the mind yet”
- ◉ Such consultations become even more difficult if children are in pain or frightened, or are crying.

# TIPS

- ◉ Children should be called by their name
- ◉ doctors should use simple language and familiar words and, basically, all the information should be given at the child's own pace and possibility to understand things.
- ◉ Last but not least, doctors should know that in order to perform a medical procedure, they should ask for the parents' permission first

◎ **Thank you**