Getting the Most From Your Cardiovascular Consultant

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Disclosures: None
Sources of Frustration

- Communication Difficulties.
  - Fax, EHR, Patient and family.
- Not getting an answer to your concern/question.
- No clear plan outlined.

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- Find some way to communicate the concern
  - Clinical question is frequently unknown to the cardiologist.
  - Patients often deny or downplay their symptoms.
  - Patients get confused about which doctor they are seeing.
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• Find some way to communicate the concern
  – Faxed notes often get lost or disappear in the “to be scanned” bucket.

• Find some way to communicate the concern
  – Fax the note and give a copy to the patient if possible.
    • Or give copy of the EKG to the patient if abnormal.
  – Review their medications and have them bring to our appointment or at a minimum an updated list.
  – Many may soon be on the same EHR.
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• Not getting an answer to your concern/question.
  – Almost always because we didn’t know the question or found something more concerning.
  – Failure of fax/EHR on our part.
  – Telephones still work well.

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• Resist the urge to “help us out.”
  – Most of the time, trying to order preliminary tests to speed up the process actually slows it down.
    • Lipids are the exception.
  – In cardiology, we need to see our own ECHOs, etc.

• This part is vitally important!
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• Please just tell the patient they are having an evaluation.
  – Many often come with the expectation of a specific test and are unhappy if that test is not performed, even if inappropriate or unnecessary.
  – Recognize that most evaluations will require multiple visits.
  – Although common in the past, insurance approvals make same day testing less likely.

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• There is no such thing as a “routine” or “screening” stress test.
  – Many other tools provide equivalent or better data.
    • 10 year CV Risk Score
    • Coronary calcium measurements

• Stress testing an asymptomatic, nondiabetic patient with a normal EKG is rarely appropriate.
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- If risk assessment is the clinical question, we must know the following:
  - Age, gender, PMH, BP, meds, smoking status - we can easily obtain.
  - Lipids will let us complete the assessment.
    - Sending a copy of the lipids with the patient is also helpful.

What is Dr Jay’s Ideal Consult Situation?

- A clear idea of why I am seeing the patient.
- An accurate medication list.
- A copy of an EKG, if abnormal.
- Recent labs to include lipids.
Thank You