

**PATIENT  
INSIGHT**

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**SUMMARY**

A patient's journey into endocrinology is shaped by a welcoming note on the examination table, symbolizing compassionate care and easing anxiety. The doctor's collaborative demeanour, characterised by attentive engagement and openness to new ideas, fosters a partnership based on trust. This perspective encourages medical professionals to embrace humility, curiosity, and mutual respect, enhancing healthcare experiences and outcomes. Such practices require no significant investment but yield profound benefits in building equitable doctor-patient relationships and improving overall healthcare quality.

**Key Words**

Physician-patient relations; examination tables; respect; trust; personal satisfaction

**INTRODUCTION**

In this patient insight, I recount my journey into the world of endocrinology, which began with a simple yet meaningful gesture of welcome during my first visit to an endocrinologist's office. Upon entering, I noticed the examination table was adorned with a cheerful message: "Welcome Marisa". That instantly eased my anxiety. This seemingly small act of kindness was my first glimpse into the compassionate care I would receive from that doctor.

As I navigated the complexities of my diagnosis and treatment, that doctor's approach stood out for its collaborative nature. She was not only attentive but also deeply engaged in our conversations, always open to exploring new ideas and willing to admit when she did not have all the answers. This was exemplified when I shared an article about ghrelin and acromegaly, and she responded with a detailed email containing her insights and further research on the topic. It was clear that she valued my perspective and viewed our relationship as a true partnership. The note of welcome on her examination table was a surprise, but it signalled her approach to my care.

The endocrinologist's compassionate and co-active approach to patient care had a significant impact on my experience. By focusing on teamwork and mutual respect, she fostered a sense of trust and understanding that is often missing in doctor-patient relationships. By sharing my experience in this patient perspective, I hope to inspire medical professionals to embrace a similar attitude—one that is rooted in humility, curiosity, and a genuine commitment to exploring all possibilities with their patients. Ultimately, this approach leads to better outcomes and a more fulfilling healthcare experience for all involved. Details matter and what this doctor did is replicable, and it doesn't require investment of time or money to help leverage the equity in the doctor-patient relationship.

**CLINICAL COMMENTARY**

Here's another instance showcasing how a simple yet thoughtful gesture can nurture the patient-

provider relationship, a phenomenon previously highlighted in *The Journal of Health Design*.<sup>1</sup> Research in marketing literature suggests that such gestures play a pivotal role in either forging new connections or repairing existing ones between providers and their clientele. One study eloquently articulates the impact of these gestures on relationships: “The study carefully examines the nuanced ways that various gestures affect emotional regulation, drive customer satisfaction levels, affect retention rates, direct online suggestions, and word-of-mouth referrals by using a meticulously designed approach. Customer satisfaction plays a crucial part in the inquiry which is considered as a key element that shapes repurchase intentions as well as loyalty”.<sup>2</sup>

In medical contexts, this translates into an opportunity to enhance equity in the patient-provider dynamic, as illustrated by the patient insight shared here. Similarly, in the hospitality industry, small gestures akin to those described by the author have proven to wield significant influence. One team emphasised the importance of prioritising customer perspectives in crafting innovative hospitality offerings, advocating for the cultivation of a culture of service innovation within organisations.<sup>3</sup>

While medical literature often focuses on large-scale policy changes, the potential impact of small, immediate adjustments made by practitioners in everyday clinical settings is frequently overlooked.<sup>4</sup> For instance, something as simple as writing the next patient’s name on the examination table cover could enhance the patient’s experience. While not universally applicable, this idea underscores the importance of considering small yet impactful changes in medical practice.

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