

We Can Make of it What We Wish

You have probably noticed that the sun is rising earlier each day and, if we are driving east in the morning or west in the afternoon, is now shining in our eyes. The vernal equinox is approaching. But is the sun really moving?

When Copernicus and then Galileo proposed the 'preposterous' heliocentric theory, they were both excommunicated for suggesting that the Earth was not at the center of the universe. Well, perception is everything, even if things are not as they appear.

A patient recently came to my office and told me about her visit to another physician's office during the previous week. She stated that after paying her \$50 co-pay, and waiting 45 minutes for her physician, she had less than 10 minutes to blurt out all of her concerns during the brief encounter. The patient perceived that she had not received any value for her office visit. One of my colleagues told me about a \$10 check that had been received from the insurance company in addition to the \$30 co-pay that had been collected for a brief office visit.

Accurate perceptions? Probably for both. Sometimes it is instructive to view the world from the other person's perspective. Looks kind of different doesn't it? Sounds like ordering an expensive prix fix meal and receiving only the salad – for both the patient and the doctor.

The pressures we face every day with increasing overhead, decreasing reimbursement and increased regulations and paperwork make it very difficult to spend the amount of time we would like to with our patients. Yet our patients can be our biggest advocates, if they are on our side, especially when we are trying to effect changes in the health care system. I provide reading materials in my waiting rooms and examining rooms that address the specific issues regarding our most pressing concerns. I make time to ask my patients if they read the material, answer their questions, and ask them to contact their representatives in Washington. This process can be accomplished in minutes and is always time well spent. The more people I speak with the more encouraged I become. I have learned that patients as a whole care about their doctors. If they feel that their doctors care about them they are certainly more willing to act in our behalf and are willing to help. If we never take the time to ask for their help, we surely will never receive it. The late, great, Rev. Al Green said it well. We ought to stay together. As physicians our voice in all issues is stronger if we are united. Imagine what a powerful force we can become, empowering our patients to help us – not only here in Maricopa County, but across the state and the nation!

The introduction of MedaBytes is progressing. Developing a new service line is time consuming and we want to be sure that we can deliver the service we promise. A 'beta-service' to a small group of physicians is underway.

I am grateful that I do not make a living with my political predictions. Super Duper Tuesday came and went, and while there has been a winnowing of the candidates, the nominees have not yet been decided. Clear choices will await us in the Fall.

We started our listening tour at Thunderbird hospital last month, and we have visits at additional hospitals in March. We will also travel to the medical schools to speak to our 'heir apparents' about the benefits of membership in the Medical Society. We will let you know what we are hearing from these groups. We are also planning a Medical Society event for our membership before summer. An announcement will be forthcoming when we have finalized our plans.

If you think about it, it is "Our Society." We can make of it what we wish. If you have suggestions for improving our services, let us know. We value your comments. Contact the medical Society at mcms@mcmsonline.com You can also email me at edonahue@mcmsonline.com

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