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**EDITORIAL**

## **Boeke in die Wagkamer**

Om pasiënte besig te hou terwyl hulle vir die dokter wag, verskaf die meeste geneeshere leesstof in die wagkamers, en die kwaliteit en verskeidenheid van hierdie leesstof is van verskeie faktore afhanklik, en 'n goeie maatstaf van die aard van die praktyk. Die beskikbare tydskrifte varieer vanaf die verflenterde, buitebladlose paar brosjures wat kosteloos aan die dokter gepos is, tot die duurste glans-publikasies wat week na week vervang word. Daar is hoofsaaklik drie dinge wat die aard van die leesstof bepaal: hoeveel die geneesheer gewillig is om aan hierdie diens vir sy wagtende pasiënte te spandeer; in hoe 'n mate die pasiënte die beskikbaar gestelde literatuur sal respekteer; en wat die aard van die praktykvoering is.

Dit is ongelukkig waar dat die meerderheid van geneeshere die koste verbonde aan die verskaffing van 'n verskeidenheid van tydskrifte wat redelik nuut is, ontsien, ten spyte daarvan dat dit binne redelike perke as bedryfskoste vir belastingsdoelendes aftrekbaar is. Die vanselfsprekende ding om te doen, is om die tydskrifte eers by die huis te laat aflewer en dit dan na 'n paar dae (tog net nie weke of selfs maande nie) na die wagkamer te neem. Met die eerste oogopslag klink dit asof ons hier belastingontduiking aanbeveel, maar dit is nie werklik die geval nie. Hoeveel dokters maak seker dat die literatuur wat hulle beskikbaar stel, wel spesifiek vir 'n wagkamer geskik is? 'n Mens moet onthou dat mense wat daar sit en lees nie onder normale omstandighede verkeer nie. As die pasiënt nie juis siek is nie, is hy of sy nogtans daar vir 'n roetine ondersoek of iets dergeliks, en daar is

spanning. 'n Ginekoloog had eens tot sy ontsteltenis ontdek dat die pragtige kleuralmanak wat hy van 'n farmaseutiese firma ontvang het en met groot trots sy pasiënte ter beskikking gestel het, 'n reeks foto's van kongenitale abnormaliteite bevat het. Al is 'n artikel oor radioterapie vir maligniteit vryelik by boekwinkels te koop, wil pasiënte wat wag om te hoor wat die uitspraak oor 'n biopsiemuster was, nie dáár daarvan lees nie.

Pasiënte dra die goed weg. Dit is 'n algemene klage en dit skyn soms of die enigste oplossing lang kettings met slotte sou wees. Dit sou egter onooglik wees, en 'n beter oplossing is om die wagkamer so te ontwerp dat die ontvangsdame voortdurend 'n ogie daarop kan hou, en boonop toe te sien dat die tydskrifte verkieslik van 'n formaat is wat nie stilletjies in 'n sak ingeglip kan word nie. 'n Algemene fout wat gemaak word, is om tydskrifte te koop wat lang, boeiende verhale bevat eerder as foto-artikels. Wie wil nou die ding agterlaat net as die storie op sy interessantste word?

Die praktyksaard het ook invloed op die beskikbare literatuur. Die dokter wat 'n doeltreffende afspraksysteem ingestel het sodat daar selde meer as twee of miskien drie pasiënte sit en wag, en hulle ook maar net 'n paar minute moet vertoeft voor die verpleegster hulle roep, het nie veel boeke nodig nie. Maar vir die geneesheer wat kronies laat is of wat sy pasiënte hoegenaamd nie probeer touwys maak om afsprake te reël nie, is stapels literatuur in die wagkamer 'n noodsaaklikeheid.

Dit is die drie faktore. Maar daar is 'n vierde rede vir gehawende tydskrifte: dit is maar sommer.

## Teach Her Young

It is common knowledge that a woman should consult her doctor regularly. Most agree that every six months or so she should visit either her practitioner or gynaecologist throughout her reproductive life and thereafter.

In the younger woman the emphasis is on perinatal aspects, the treatment of infections and advice in general; whereas in the older woman it entails routine care, attempting to obviate cancer and to prevent her health being affected by the ravages of time and of having procreatively done her duty. Thus the quite acceptable routine that the woman should visit her advisers reasonably regularly from marriage to menopause—this is as it should be, and could be done even more regularly. More emphasis could be placed on her also doing so more regularly after the menopause, and for the rest of her life, for reasons known to medicos but not always fully realised by elderly women, especially after having had 'the operation'.

But what of the woman of the future—the young girl prior to puberty and in adolescence? In our modern world there seems to be patent disinclination and incapability on the part of both parents and teachers to provide adequate sex education to youngsters. To the average young girl her body and its functions are such sensitive, private and emotionally important subjects that they need very careful and understanding consideration from a very young age. It is essential that every girl should know exactly how she is anatomically formed and when what will happen and why. This will prevent that element of surprised apprehension so common at the menarche. And a very strong case can also be made for the need to teach her the

adolescent facts of life—in groups about bees and birds—but also at a more intimate and private level about sexual integration and the mechanics, both physical and emotional, of sexual intercourse and the actual process of birth. Such education could go a long way in side-stepping the trauma so often observed among the uninformed during courtship and marriage. It is more than likely that most early divorces stem from maladjusted confluence of bodies and intellects of two otherwise quite clued-up individuals.

It remains surprising that in a world so knowledgeable about such a diversity of things, so little time is devoted in school to such vital aspects of living as sex, parenthood, the preparation of meals and the physiology of the human body.

The one person who should be qualified to provide such a service to each patient from the age of birth even, but without a doubt from school-going age, both on a group and private level, is the family doctor backed by his gynaecological colleagues. The question is therefore posed whether more concerted consideration should not be given to this thorny subject in the training of doctors and in medical practice, thus making available ongoing instructive care to every child, and especially to every female right from the time she becomes female—and that is usually quite soon after birth.

It is possible that what today is so loosely ascribed to permissiveness and promiscuity among our often-maligned teenagers stems from a dire need for more knowledge about the intricacies of life a lot sooner and better than disinterested adults are providing today.