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Why are complaints about the health care system increasing? Possible explanations

Background: The number of reported complaints about health care has increased during the last decades. This presentation will address possible explanations and places the concept “complaint” in a wider context.

Questions of interest:

- How come that complaints rise when we have improved education and training in communication over several years?
- Is there a negative connection with better education in communication between provider and patients, and complaints on the other hand?
- How can we understand, from the patients’ perspective that the more rights, information, and easy to search and find knowledge, the more dissatisfaction we find?
- Are there other factors that could affect the tendency to complain, during the last 40 years, that we are not aware of?

This paper will add some clues, but maybe new questions will be asked, at the best these could reduce complaints.

We know that satisfaction and compliance or adherence are related; the more satisfied a patient is, the more will the patient follow counseling, advices and treatments. One could say for every unsatisfied patient the health care has failed. Dissatisfaction could create unnecessary suffering for patient and extra costs for the health care regarding that the patient does not follow our recommendation and even seeks new (unnecessary) medical contacts. This we know from a great number of scientific studies; what we have little knowledge about is the “anatomy of complaints”; both how it occurs and how to understand it, and in the longer perspective how to avoid and prevent it.

Biography

Björn Fossum is a paediatric nurse and holds a PhD from Karolinska Institutet, Stockholm, Sweden. Since 2013 he is professor in nursing sciences at Sophiahemmet university, and senior researcher at Karolinska Institutet, Department for clinical science and education Södersjukhuset.

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