

How can a patient prevent errors in diagnosis

Your active role can help prevent Diagnostic Errors

One of the top causes of medical harm is wrong or missed diagnosis which means wrong treatment or medication. Despite best efforts errors happen for various reasons such as time pressure, incomplete/ incorrect information or lack of diagnostic tests, and error in judgment.

By keeping yourself informed and engaged in this critical phase, you can help your doctor make an accurate diagnosis and ultimately prevent errors.

Here is what you can do:

1. **Provide complete and accurate medical history** including past and current medical conditions, medications, allergies, and family history. Make a summary of your illness and treatment for the physicians to consider.
2. **Maintain clear, complete, and honest communication** with the doctor. Do not hide anything. Share details of earlier self-diagnosis and self-treatment if any, changes in condition, including duration, intensity, and any triggering or relieving factors.
3. **Undergo tests/ investigations prescribed:** Investigations and tests provide additional data for the doctor to make a decision. Get them done immediately. Seek clarification if in doubt.
4. **Review test results** to ensure they match the information provided by your doctor. Pay attention to any discrepancies or errors in the results.
5. **Ask questions** about your diagnosis, treatment options, prescribed course of action, time for treatment, and finances required. Find out what to expect as a result of your treatment along with any risks and side effects.
6. **Seek a second opinion** if you are unsure about a diagnosis, particularly in case of a serious illness or treatment plan like surgery. A second opinion can help to generate an alternative treatment plan or confirm and reassure that the existing plan is the most optimum.
7. **Avoid self-detection and self-treatment** with internet searches or word-of-mouth suggestions as this will not be a comprehensive assessment. It can further deteriorate your health and delay proper treatment.
8. **Be aware of non-qualified doctors:** They commit to quick and guaranteed solutions and sometimes give harmful substances that temporarily subside the symptoms (by giving strong steroids in large quantities in some cases) which cause harm in the long run.

Correct diagnosis is most critical in determining the right treatment, play an active role, and reassure yourself.

To Know More:

- [Do I need to undergo Diagnostic checks? Are there any risks](#)
- [What can go wrong with my diagnosis?](#)

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