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Is family physician a member of the family? Physician's aspect

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Background & Aim: Patient-physician relationship is the basis of medical practice. Family practice is identified as based on relationship which is not limited with the consultation room. A family physician should know his/her patients as well as their home life, environment and relationships.

Our aim was to research how much physicians know about their patients beyond the consultation room.

Method: A cross-sectional analytic study was planned and conducted in Bornova, Izmir. 113 face to face interviews were done with family physicians. The survey included questions about the demographic features as well as questions about level of acquaintance and medical history knowledge with his/her patients of the physicians besides patient-physician communication and patients' trust. The data was analyzed using the SPSS version 16.0 program and besides descriptive analysis; chi-square test, student's T test and correlation tests were used.

Results: The acquaintance level, knowledge of medical conditions, opinions about communication and social relations of physicians with their patients are 2.40, 2.89, 2.70 (minimum 1, maximum 4) and 2.00 (minimum 1, maximum 5), respectively. Physicians who had 3500 or less registered patients had higher ratings regarding social relations and communication. Physicians who have never moved had higher ratings in social relations, communication, acquaintanceship and general mean points. Social relations and communication were better at socio-economically improved areas. Women's ratings on trust, medical features, acquaintanceship and general mean points were higher than men's.

Conclusions: Family physicians do not consider themselves confident regarding their knowing of their patients.