

BOOK REVIEWS

Jerome Groopman, MD, and Pamela Hartzband, MD. *Your Medical Mind: How to Decide What is Right for You.* New York: The Penguin Press; 2011. 308 pp, \$27.95 (hardcover), ISBN 978-1-59420-311-4.

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Your Medical Mind: How to Decide What is Right for You, a joint venture by Jerome Groopman (*How Doctors Think*, 2008) and Paula Hartzband, provides a window into the minds of how patients make personal healthcare decisions. While *How Doctors Think* examined how physicians formulate medical diagnoses, *Your Medical Mind* follows patients as they make the difficult decisions endemic to modern healthcare. Each of the 9 chapters features the stories of 2 or more patients, who, though they may share a medical condition, choose different courses of treatment. The authors illustrate different personalities and tendencies of patients by comparing factors that contribute to each patient's medical decision making style. Overall, the book is an easy read and marketed to a wide audience. Groopman and Hartzband, both physicians and faculty members at Harvard Medical School, do an excellent job of limiting medical jargon and explain every procedure or risk in layman's terms. For readers who wish to learn more about the research behind the book, there are over 50 pages of notes and about 20 pages of references.

Although the book's message is mainly intended for patients, healthcare providers will learn a tremendous amount from reading *Your Medical Mind*. The information in the book can help providers build more productive patient relationships, improve patient communication, and engage with patients to make collaborative health care decisions. Objective presentation of research data provides a firm foundation on which providers and

patients can develop a treatment plan. Individualization is advocated as a vital element for improving patient outcomes; patients are more likely to comply with a plan designed around their unique needs and values. Readers will examine patient stories in which providers respect patient autonomy, even if it contradicts their own opinions. Because of this respect, the provider and patient are able to develop a relationship of trust. In one of the stories, a patient, no longer able to communicate due to a complex illness, must trust his provider to make the right decisions for his care. Because of the extensive time spent developing a patient-provider relationship, the provider was confident in his ability to act on behalf of the patient. By incorporating elements of communication into patient relationships, providers can actively work to prevent unnecessary stress and regret surrounding these decisions.

Although the stories in the book do not directly involve pharmacy scenarios, pharmacists at any stage of their career could benefit from reading *Your Medical Mind*. Through the many interviews conducted by the authors, pharmacists will discover different patient types, such as believers and doubters, and how being one or the other affects a patient's healthcare decisions. By recognizing these types, pharmacists will be better prepared to individualize their counseling styles and deal with how patients adhere to their treatment regimens. Pharmacy colleges and schools should consider using *Your Medical Mind* as a supplementary resource for teaching communication modules. Pharmacists will enjoy the engaging stories in *Your Medical Mind* and the light it shines on the unique processes patients use when making their healthcare decisions.

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