

## Do we know everything?

The most misleading assumption or statement is that any person can be so smart that she or he knows all the answers. Yet, there are many people who think just that. Whether they are credited with a master's degree or PhD, or make a ton of money, or simply have a lot of experience, they still do not know it all. Someone can be smart in their field, but the smarter they truly are, the more they understand that there is much more to learn. And it is true regardless of the field. If someone tells you otherwise, they are just not smart enough.

Our world is ever-changing. We learn new scientific facts; we alter our knowledge about some other facts. Medical professionals must complete certain numbers of continuing education hours in order to get their license renewed. Even medical assistants have their re-certification every several years and they have to keep their knowledge updated. So, when we hear from our patients that they know all the answers because they spend years working in a medical field, we always question ourselves: do they really mean it? We do not know everything, and this is why we constantly ask questions, check, and verify.

Some of our patients get annoyed with our personnel asking about their medical history or medication at their periodic visits. They say: oh, this is just about my skin, why would you care? The answer is simple: yes, we do care, and we should. More and more skin related ailments are associated with the immune system and inflammatory changes. Any immune system connection or inflammation are the whole-body problems. They are systemic. Even when we prescribe topical medications, they might have an absorption level conflicting with the other current medication or treatment, and it is important for us to know. Recently, we had a patient who received a steroid injection for arthritis. It was localized to the joint, but, for whatever reason, its systemic 'leak' was causing some symptoms, like increased heart rate. The patient developed a



flare of contact dermatitis, which could be resolved quickly by another steroid injection. The patient did not think the two were anyhow related, because they were by two different specialties and he did not feel reporting the joint injection was important. It was. It potentially might have caused more unwanted symptoms, which were avoided by intervention with slower acting non-steroidal topical medication.

There are many more everyday examples of how crucial it is to verify your medical history and keep it updated. How significant it is to remove medications you do not use any more from the list of your treatments. How valid it is to mention that you underwent some procedures or surgeries. Let the medical professionals decide what matters and what not, even if you come to check your skin. And the short 'no change' is not good enough, because you do not know or remember what we have noted in your records the last time you visited. We know that sometimes it adds a few minutes to your visit, but please, let us do our jobs well. It is done to benefit you on the long run. It also protects your safety and the optimal outcome from what we treat you for.

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