

Clinicians: Better to Sit than Stand



Attention, doctors and nurses: when it comes to interacting with patients, sit don't stand!

From the [Kansas City Nursing News](#) comes interesting news – patients feel more satisfied with their doctor or nurse when that person sits, versus when they remain standing. A study conducted at University of Kansas Hospital entitled “Effect of sitting vs. standing on perception of provider time at bedside” compared the actual duration of time spent during 120 consultations with the time that was perceived by the patient, and concluded that patients perceive a clinician has spent more time at their bedside when they sit rather than stand. Amazingly, they found the difference in time perceived to be from 5 to almost 15 more minutes when the clinician was sitting versus when they were standing.

The study followed a particular doctor as he had short, 1 to 2 minute consultations with patients. The doctor, who had received feedback from patients previously complaining that he was always in a hurry, began sitting with patients during these short consultations and almost immediately his patient satisfaction scores improved. The calming effect of sitting with a patient versus aloofly standing near them single-handedly changed the way his patients view him as their doctor.

It makes sense that sitting rather than standing would make a patient feel more relaxed, open, and non-intimidated, but it's surprising to see the differences in perception being so drastic.

This has overlap to areas besides healthcare too. When you're visiting clients, co-workers, or someone you just met, match their eye level, whether that's sitting sitting or standing, in order to help you both feel at ease. So be sure to have a spare chair lying around that they can use!

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