

Common Sense Medicine

KAMRAN HASHEMI, M.D.

COMPLEX INTERNAL AND INPATIENT
MEDICINE • GERIATRICS

Turning 50 in most professions marks the beginning of the slow march to retirement. Quite to the contrary, a contemplative physician at 50 begins a daily journey of professional enlightenment. Similar to a fine Bordeaux or a well-aged tawny port, nothing prepares a physician to care for patients better than time and experience; and nothing except time and experience demonstrates to the self-aware practitioner the utter simplicity of our current health care crisis and the complete lack of anything even resembling common sense in the daily practice and delivery of health care in the United States.

I often wish Andy Rooney had been a physician – a doctor curmudgeon so to speak, pointing out to the nation common sense problems in medicine that make no sense, as he did so brilliantly for a lifetime on “60 Minutes.” For example, why are pill bottles stuffed with cotton?

My philosophy is that the practice of medicine needs a good dose of common sense. As a group, physicians order too many tests, prescribe too many medications and spend too little time actually listening to our patients. If a physician takes the time to listen to their patient’s story, at some moment the patient will in their own words tell the physician exactly what is wrong with them. Often, even patients do not want to accept the common sense solution to a medical problem.

If I could, I would limit my practice to senior citizens. I adore Geriatrics. They are the most enjoyable group of patients. My favorite medical pastime is to take my geriatric patients off unnecessary medications. Here’s why: I trained and lived in New York City 10 years and helped develop “Doctor’s-on-Call.” I made over 10,000 house calls in the five boroughs of New York City and witnessed firsthand, as I sat at my patient’s

kitchen tables, the chaos of medication bottles. Without the benefit of a \$200,000,000 double-blind study, it was simply common sense that every patient I saw was not taking the medications correctly. I am a physician, with a reasonable memory (unless you ask my wife), and if I needed to take two pills, three times a day, I would mess it up.

A few weeks ago, I had a new adorable patient come to my office. She had moved back into the area to be near her family. At 90 years of age, she was stunning, her gray-blue hair perfectly sprayed by her beautician, her French nails perfectly manicured, and her clothing clean and elegant. She had no complaints and just wanted to establish care. I reviewed her medication list and I bit my lip, my lovely 90-year-old new patient, who was just meeting me and really had no reason to trust me, was taking more than 30 pills a day, and she weighed 106 pounds with all her clothes on. I wanted to stop all her medications. But, everyone wants every ailment covered with some treatment or pill.

I believe in medications when correctly prescribed for the right condition, in fact some of the medications we have available now are truly miracles. However, common sense should rule and there is no way that any 90-year-old person needs or can tolerate 30 pills a day. She weighed 106 pounds and was on two medications to lower her cholesterol! Again, I wish I had Dr. Rooney’s help; at age 90, why do we even care what the cholesterol is?

After fifteen minutes of talking, she did admit she always felt tired and dizzy. This was my chance. I took a deep breath and said, “I am not the smartest doctor, and I am sure all these medications are important in their own way, but 30 pills a day is just too many medications and



Kamran Hashemi, M.D., grew up in Arlington Heights where his father was a surgeon at Northwest Community Hospital. He attended Rolling Meadows High School, Northwestern University, and Northwestern University Medical School, and did post graduate training in New York City. Dr. Hashemi specializes in common sense solutions to Complex Internal Medicine, Hospital Medicine and Geriatrics.

maybe it is the combinations of all these medications that is making you feel tired and weak.”

She nodded her head, turned to her daughter and said, “You see I don’t need all these damn pills.” She turned to me and very firmly declared, “I like you, start cutting.” She left my office on three pills a day.

As our President and Congress struggle hopelessly for solutions to the high cost of medical care, they might consider one simple and inexpensive solution, indeed, a doctrine our great nation was built upon ... common sense.

Common Sense Medicine Tips

- Every time you see your physician, review your medications and make sure there is a common sense reason, that you understand, why the medication is needed.
- Every time a physician wants to start a new medication or order any diagnostic test ask for three common sense reasons, that you understand, why you need to take the drug or have the test and make sure it makes common sense.
- And for all our sakes, someone figure out why they jam all that cotton in the medicine bottles.

Contact Information:

KAMRAN HASHEMI, M.D.
HASHEMI MEDICAL GROUP AT THE
BARRINGTON CLINIC
4 Executive Court, Ste. 3
South Barrington
847-756-4500
Email: hmgservice@gmail.com
www.barringtonclinic.com