Communication with the gifted patient

Gifted patients are most likely to search for a lot of medical information themselves and will ask more questions and also more probing questions when speaking with their doctor. Sometimes this can lead to conflicts. The gifted patient can ask difficult questions and the caregiver can feel like they are not taken seriously as a professional or sometimes feel intimidated.

Some gifted patients will explain their complaints very differently from average patients, so that a condition may not be recognised, the patient doesn't feel heard, a diagnosis takes longer than usual and conflicts can arise (see IHBV-leaflet ‘Clever patient can be difficult for doctor’).

What to do if you think your patient is gifted?

Giftedness is not a ‘diagnosis’. However, many gifted people are happy when they know it and it can give them some peace of mind (“I’m not crazy”). Many gifted people only discover they are gifted into trouble in the workplace or in their personal lives. Because there is a greater focus on gifted children in recent years, parents often start to wonder if it concerns them as well.

The earlier in life someone knows what giftedness is and how to live with it in an effective manner, the better.

Some gifted people have complaints or problems that will need psychiatric treatment. Unfortunately there is currently hardly any knowledge about giftedness in the psychiatric field of expertise (see IHBV-leaflet: ‘Adult gifted clients in mental health care’). On the website of the IHBV you can find a list of caregivers with knowledge about giftedness.

As a doctor you can point people to a number of informative websites. On the website of the IHBV there is a wealth of knowledge on giftedness in adults and elderly people (see IHBV-leaflet: ‘Not everyone is average’ and the page about gifted seniors).

Contact with other gifted people is proven to be very valuable. There are HB-Cafés organised by the IHBV or gatherings of Mensa, the high IQ society. Contacts people make through the internet on forums or Facebook can be very supportive as well.

Reference


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