



Primum Non Nocere

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Unfortunately, sometimes, not all Doctors feel that "Primum Non Nocere" (first do not harm) a term probably created by Hippocrates, is the ABC in daily medical therapeutics of whatever specialty you consider.

Once the correct diagnosis has been made for the patient (essential primary stage of the medical act and sometimes complex), then comes the therapeutic stage, which can be mainly medical or surgical.

Of course, the latter does not raise doubts when an acute appendicitis must be operated. This condition as you all know, generates what is called a surgical acute abdomen, and it is always correct to "open" because also sometimes we can face with another surgical condition in which we had not thought about, and otherwise the patient may die.

But it is also clear that sometimes we "open" with all the "Primum Non Nocere" on our side, and we suddenly find ourselves in "a TV series world": our patient had abdominal pain due to a clinical condition of lead poisoning which produces an acute medical abdomen. Remember Vincent Van Gogh became also "famous", for his chronic lead intoxication due to his lead paints materials.

I must focus here on the medical therapeutic problem, the "Primum Non Nocere" in the sense of not to administer drugs that are wrongly indicated, medicines in inadequate doses (high or low), or due to inexperienced professional need: treat on your own the doubts.

This happens in all areas of Medicine, but of course, the magnitude of the erroneous medical-therapeutic act is different according to the Medical Specialty. It is not the same to treat a mild skin problem with an ointment of marginal activity (with the most of respects to my colleagues Dermatologists), than to give inappropriate doses of antibiotics for a severe bacterial lung infection, which can and should be cured by the correct doses of these drugs.

This phenomenon also exists in Clinical Oncology.

In this discipline, the problems related to "Primum Non Nocere" are fundamentally 2: in the treatment of Cancer pain and in the medical therapies for patients with less probability of cure and survival.