

“Medical Advice” or “Opinion” – The Important Difference

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To protect an organization regarding any “medical” information provided, the information is often prefaced as “We do not give Medical Advice” or, the organization instructs its members they are not to give medical advice. Yet, when we read further, the information provided does appear as “medical advice”.

Absolute “Medical Advice” is expected to be only provided by those medical professionals who have studied and awarded the titles of Medical Doctor/M.D., Doctor of Medicine, or Medical Physician.

Those who have studied and earned a doctorate in philosophy, PhD, can also be addressed as “Doctor”, but it is important to recognize in this case that address is NOT a “Doctor of Medicine”. A Doctor of Philosophy identifies those who have studied to a higher level of education that qualifies them with “the theoretical basis of a particular branch of knowledge or experience”.

But now we come to “Opinion.” Important to note is that there is a distinction between “Medical Advice” and “Opinion”.

Medical Doctors are considered the only specialists to give Medical Advice. The information they provide a patient is a direct result of medical expertise and knowledge.

It is not unreasonable to expect that with deep research and study, the success of specific medications, and review of multitudes of successful treatments performed by physicians, that “opinions” can be formed by lay-persons or patients as to the reliability of that information. What is reasonable to expect from a person or organization passing on medical information, particularly when not accompanied by reference material, is prefacing any suggestions or recommendations made to a patient or anyone else that the medical information provided IS “opinion” that should be reviewed further, then discussed with one’s treating physician.

In my position as having chosen to be a mentor to help patients diagnosed with Prostate Cancer and their caregivers to better understand this men’s cancer based on their diagnostics, treatment already performed, and treatment planned, I recognized the importance of separating my “opinion” from “medical advice” by developing the following as my “disclaimer” so the recipient understands this important difference.

Disclaimer

Please recognize that I am not a Medical Doctor. Rather, I do consider myself a medical detective. I have been an avid student researching and studying prostate cancer as a survivor and continuing patient since 1992. I have dedicated my retirement years to continued deep research and study in order to serve as an advocate for prostate cancer awareness, and, from an activist patient’s viewpoint, as a mentor to voluntarily help patients, caregivers, and others interested develop an understanding of this insidious men’s disease, its treatment options, and the treatment of the side effects that often accompany treatment. There is absolutely no charge for my mentoring – I provide this free service as one who has been there and hoping to make their journey one with better understanding and knowledge than was available to me when I was diagnosed so many years ago. Importantly, readers of medical information I may provide are provided this “disclaimer” to make certain they understand that the comments or recommendations I make are not intended to be the procedure to blindly follow; rather, they are to be reviewed as My Opinion, then used for further personal research, study, and subsequent discussion with the medical professional/physician providing their prostate cancer care.

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