

## **A Talkative Patient**

Most patients are usually shy and quiet when visiting a healthcare provider, but there are those patients who tend to be talkative and ramble on without saying anything relevant to their reason for the visit. As a healthcare practitioner, NPs must be able to listen carefully to determine if the patient is discussing their reason for the visit. “Faced with limited time the NP must not become impatient while treating the patient”<sup>1</sup>. It is important that the NP makes the patient feel comfortable to talk but keeping the discussion on topic. Too many interruptions by the healthcare provider may make the patient “shut down” and become angry.

For example, during a visit instead of talking about her condition or problem, the patient starts talking about her grandson’s baseball game and then continues by talking about her husband’s relentless desire to purchase a Corvette which she is opposed to. This patient may need some time to get comfortable or she could be a talkative patient. The healthcare provider needs to assess whether the patient is obsessively detailed, apprehensive, disorganization of thoughts or unduly anxious to determine any other conditions which may be causing the increased chatting. The healthcare provider should allow the patient to get comfortable and listen for 5-10 minutes before continuing with the visit. The healthcare provider should never show impatience toward a patient.

The talkative patient’s behavior is obviously evaluated by being heard, but there could be underlying conditions which can lead to the increased talking. The approach to dealing with a talkative patient is guided by the underlying cause of the patient’s talkativeness.<sup>3</sup> Many patients who talk excessively do not normally realize they are talking in such a manner. Many psychological conditions can cause a patient to behave in such a manner, such as bipolar disorders, schizophrenics, anxiety disorders, personality disorders, or attention deficit hyperactivity disorders. Determining a speech disorder is also part of the mental status evaluation.<sup>2</sup> The healthcare provider should have this noted within the notes and be aware of the disorders which can possibly be identified through this characteristic.

When a healthcare provider encounters a talkative patient he or she should as mentioned before, let the patient talk for 5 to 10 minutes to allow the patient to become comfortable and then discuss how the exam should progress. Discuss with the patient that there is only limited amount of time and the need to address his or her conditions is very important. Also discuss with the