

Roadblocks To Care

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There seems to be a growing aversion to the medical system in recent times. Why are people so hesitant and apprehensive about accessing medical care for anything other than chronic or life-threatening conditions? I certainly see it regularly when interacting with active people. Why is this so?

I am not sure I have that answer completely - but let me propose a few potential reasons.

Just like any other enterprise, there needs to be a value added benefit to going to a clinician for care. The "customer experience" starts from the moment they contact the office. You're on hold waiting for the next customer service representative. A frustrating start, for sure. Let's say you get lucky - and don't have to wait to schedule an appointment. Is the provider of your choice on your insurance plan? Or will this be an (oftentimes exorbitant and inflated) out-of-pocket expense? Now I have to balance the potential cost-to-benefit ratio of the experience.

So there you are - finally in to see the provider. How often do you then spend a scant few minutes with them - during which you can barely announce your name and the basic area of symptoms before you are shuffled off with a prescription, or told to simply get an X-ray (or more expensive diagnostic test), or, worse yet, told to simply "stop doing what you're doing" and sent on your way?

Is this sounding familiar? It's the experience of many - and no wonder they don't want to use the system.

In psychosocial terms, we have two types of people - the avoiders and the confronters. The avoiders - well, they won't be taking responsibility for their own care any time soon - and if they do, they will be passive participants in the process. The confronters - want to do so NOW. They want answers, they want to know how to fix the problem and prevent it from recurring. They want to learn.

The current system as we know it isn't aligned with the mindset of an active person. We are in a society that is moving towards greater and greater access to online information. To many, the options are to "search the Internet" or "be told to stop doing something I enjoy - and rest". Or ... perhaps even worse yet, to partake in visit upon visit of passive care. When these are the options faced, why would they bother? As we see so many times, they will simply not go - especially when faced with these "roadblocks to care". Would you blame them?

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