# Generation Z doctors redefine bedside manner with casual empathy and humour



The emergence of Generation Z in the healthcare field is reshaping the doctor-patient dynamic, fusing a casual approach with a vested interest in empathetic care. This cohort, born between 1997 and the early 2010s, is starting to dominate medical spaces as graduates and residents. Their interactions with patients often showcase a blend of humour, relatable language, and a refreshing honesty.

One recent anecdote brings this shift to life. Mandi, a middle school teacher, recounted her experience with a young doctor after being diagnosed with idiopathic intracranial hypertension, a condition characterised by elevated pressure around the brain. Upon entering the exam room, the doctor greeted Mandi with "Yo dawg," a phrase that instantly shattered formalities. She was advised urgently to go to emergency care, and when she hesitated due to financial concerns about the ambulance ride, the doctor reassured her nonchalantly, "Just don’t pay it. What are they going to do?" This encounter was labelled 'adorable' by Mandi, yet it reflects a broader ambivalence some have towards this new generation of healthcare professionals.

Similar sentiments were echoed by Sammy, a mother of three who encountered a young ER doctor during a stressful situation involving her daughter's severe nosebleed. The doctor, addressing Sammy's daughter directly in a relatable manner, made an unexpected comment about the nose's delicate vessels by saying, “And that’s why we snort cocaine!” Initially stunned, Sammy later appreciated the doctor’s humour, noting that it resonated with her daughter and provided an unusual but effective way to explain the medical scenario.

Research indicates that younger doctors often display a heightened sense of empathy and enthusiasm, diverging from some frustrations voiced about older practitioners. Many patients have expressed appreciation for their openness, which includes a reluctance to prescribe high-risk medications like benzodiazepines. A growing body of online testimonials supports this view, with younger doctors being praised for their responsiveness to patient needs and feelings. In stark contrast, encounters with older doctors have frequently been described as frustrating and dismissive.

Nonetheless, the clinical experiences with younger physicians are not universally positive. Some patients report that these newer doctors lack the depth of intuition and experience that comes with years of practice. An example was shared by one individual who found herself having to document her symptoms meticulously to persuade her young doctor of a potential medical condition, highlighting a disconnect that can arise from generational differences in approach.

Projections suggest that by 2030, Gen Z will constitute roughly 30% of the healthcare workforce. This transition is not without concern from seasoned professionals, many of whom question whether Gen Z will be adequately prepared for the rigours of medical practice. They note that this generation, used to instant information and communication, might need tailored guidance on critically evaluating data and adhering to structured learning processes.

Interestingly, a 2018 analysis of over seven million physician reviews revealed that more than half of patients place significant value on characteristics like compassion and bedside manner. Institutions have begun addressing this demand, recognising that in an increasingly competitive healthcare environment, the ability to connect with patients can significantly influence satisfaction and outcomes. Moreover, hospitals are enforcing a zero-tolerance policy towards brusque or dismissive behaviour from physicians, advocating for a cultivated sense of personalised care.

This ongoing evolution in the doctor-patient relationship reflects a larger societal shift towards prioritising emotional intelligence and interpersonal skills in healthcare. As Generation Z continues to shape the workforce, their fresh perspectives may not only challenge traditional norms but could also lead to holistic improvements in patient care.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-14758297/Woman-shares-baffling-experience-younger-doctor-slang-filled-check-up.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://www.physicianspractice.com/view/-nobody-wants-to-work-a-generational-guide-for-practice-staffing)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-14758297/Woman-shares-baffling-experience-younger-doctor-slang-filled-check-up.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[6]](https://www.mgma.com/news-articles/patients-want-personality-bedside-manner-from-their-physicians)
* Paragraph 3 – [[2]](https://www.mgma.com/news-articles/patients-want-personality-bedside-manner-from-their-physicians), [[5]](https://www.rossu.edu/about/blog/how-to-develop-good-bedside-manner)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-14758297/Woman-shares-baffling-experience-younger-doctor-slang-filled-check-up.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[4]](https://www.fiercehealthcare.com/healthcare/good-bedside-manner-no-longer-optional)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-14758297/Woman-shares-baffling-experience-younger-doctor-slang-filled-check-up.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[7]](https://www.physicianspractice.com/view/-nobody-wants-to-work-a-generational-guide-for-practice-staffing)
* Paragraph 6 – [[3]](https://www.physicianspractice.com/view/-nobody-wants-to-work-a-generational-guide-for-practice-staffing), [[6]](https://www.mgma.com/news-articles/patients-want-personality-bedside-manner-from-their-physicians)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-14758297/Woman-shares-baffling-experience-younger-doctor-slang-filled-check-up.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.mgma.com/news-articles/patients-want-personality-bedside-manner-from-their-physicians> - A 2018 analysis of over seven million physician reviews revealed that 52% of patients emphasised the importance of physicians possessing compassion, comfort, patience, personality, or bedside manner. This underscores the significance of non-clinical factors in patient evaluations, highlighting the need for healthcare providers to cultivate strong interpersonal skills to enhance patient satisfaction and care quality.
3. <https://www.physicianspractice.com/view/-nobody-wants-to-work-a-generational-guide-for-practice-staffing> - This article discusses the generational differences in the workforce, focusing on Generation Z's comfort with technology and preference for flexible working arrangements. It highlights how Gen Z's digital nativity influences their approach to healthcare, including their expectations for telehealth and remote patient monitoring, and their emphasis on mental health and well-being.
4. <https://www.fiercehealthcare.com/healthcare/good-bedside-manner-no-longer-optional> - The article examines the growing importance of good bedside manner in healthcare, noting that hospitals are increasingly intolerant of rude or brusque behaviour from doctors. It highlights that institutions like Partners HealthCare and Duke University School of Medicine are implementing training programs to encourage physicians to be more sensitive and responsive to patient needs, leading to improved patient and caregiver satisfaction.
5. <https://www.rossu.edu/about/blog/how-to-develop-good-bedside-manner> - This blog post emphasises the significance of developing a good bedside manner for physicians. It discusses how positive patient impressions can lead to improved outcomes and highlights the importance of patient-centred care. The article also notes that patients are more likely to trust doctors with good bedside manners, underscoring the need for healthcare providers to cultivate effective interpersonal skills.
6. <https://www.mgma.com/news-articles/patients-want-personality-bedside-manner-from-their-physicians> - A 2018 analysis of over seven million physician reviews revealed that 52% of patients emphasised the importance of physicians possessing compassion, comfort, patience, personality, or bedside manner. This underscores the significance of non-clinical factors in patient evaluations, highlighting the need for healthcare providers to cultivate strong interpersonal skills to enhance patient satisfaction and care quality.
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