

Letters Correspondance

Praise for family physicians

I read the brief article entitled “Coping with family medicine putdowns,” by Dr Larry Reynolds. Several points are worth making.

First, patients are whole beings and not individual organ systems. Although specialty care is necessary, most complex problems are not limited to one system and are *best* managed by family physicians.

Second, family physicians, with their complete longitudinal knowledge of the whole patient and that patient’s preferences and beliefs, provide cost-effective care, often avoiding duplication or unnecessary services.

Third, without family physicians, my job as an emergency physician would be much more difficult. The sometimes long and complex process of diagnosis and treatment usually *only begins* with a brief encounter in the emergency department.

Finally, family physicians often identify the mistakes that I have made with their patients in the emergency department, and *quietly* correct them without deriding me.

I appreciate a great article by a great family physician!

—Tony Herd
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by e-mail