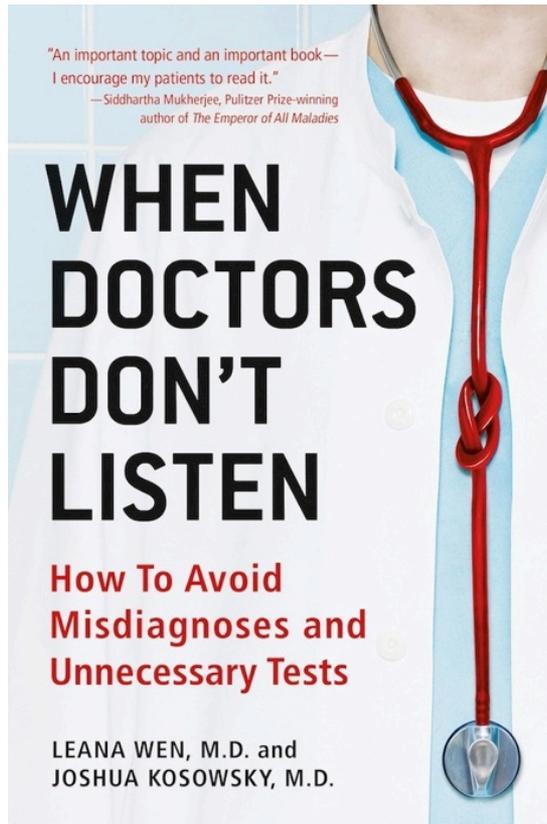


How to Avoid Misdiagnoses and Unnecessary Tests: A Patient's Guide



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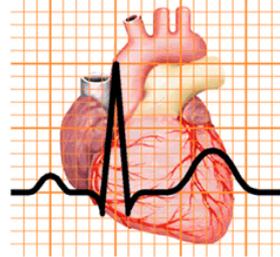
Healthwatch USA Conference: Nov 9th 2012

The story of Jerry

- “chest pain” → “chest pain pathway”



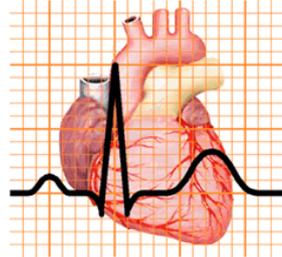
abc...EKG



- Overnight stay



abc...EKG



The problem

- Unnecessary tests & side effects



- The doctor isn't listening.
- The patient isn't involved with his/her healthcare.
- Doctors and patients are disconnected, frustrated, with more testing and treatment, but far fewer answers.

Pressures and consequences

- Lots of patients, little time
- Use technology instead of talking to patients
- Medical training
- “Cookbook medicine”,
not personalized medicine
- Passive acceptance by patients



Misdiagnosis



- 100,000 deaths from medical errors per year
- Most medical errors are errors in diagnosis.
- 80%+ of diagnoses are made based on history.
- But doctors are listening less and less....

What does all of this tell us?

- Doctors need to be better
- Healthcare system needs to be reformed
- **But we cannot wait!**
- Patients need to:
 - Ensure doctors are listening
 - Challenge doctors
 - Be equal partners
 - Make sure to get the right diagnosis





#1. Establish an equal partnership with your doctor

- Find a good doctor, if you can
- Make sure your doctor knows that you expect an equal partnership
- Partner in your decision-making
- Ask to share in the thought process

#2: Focus on your diagnosis

- Why is diagnosis so important?
 - Before you treat it, know what it is
 - Know what you have so you know what to expect, what to watch for, what to do about it
- Never leave the doctor without knowing your diagnosis
- Assure your doctor, it's OK if not 100% sure

#3: Make sure your doctor is listening

- Not listening leads to grave errors
- Tell a good story
 - Begin at the beginning
 - Provide context
 - Use your own voice
- Write down key details
- Rehearse

#4. Understand every test ordered

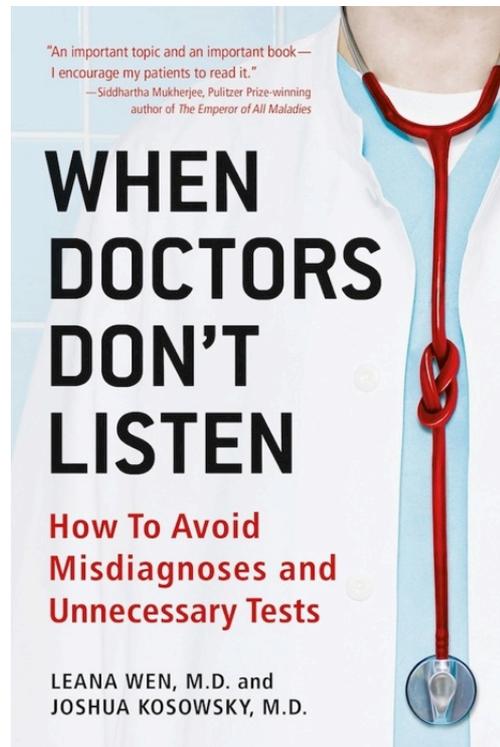
- Every test should be done for a specific reason
- Little use for “screening” test
- Every test has potential harms
- Ask:
 - What is it looking for?
 - How is the test going to change management?
 - Is it necessary?
 - What are the harms? Alternatives?

#5. Ask all questions before you leave

- Come prepared with questions
 - Pen/paper
 - Trusted friend/family member
- Some questions:
 - What is my diagnosis?
 - What can I expect?
 - What can I do to get better?
 - What are the warning signs?
- If something doesn't seem right, ask about it now

Can you become an empowered patient?

- Absolutely! Your body and your health at stake.
- NOW is the time to get the healthcare you deserve.



8 Pillars to Better Diagnosis

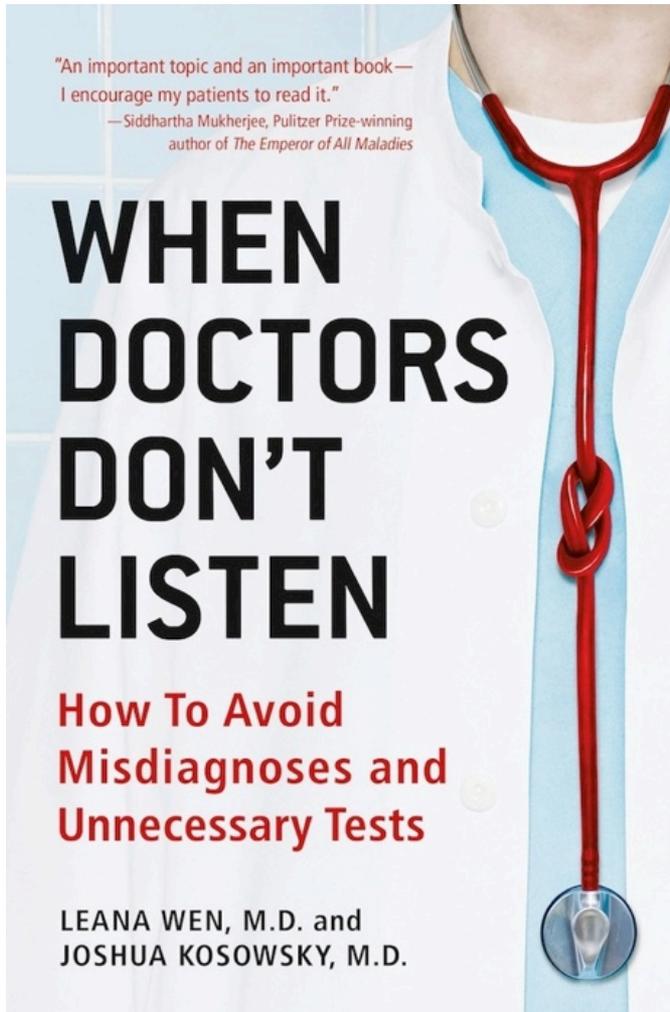
50+ “Prescriptions”

21 Exercises

4 Worksheets

Conclusions

- Lots of pressures leading to bad healthcare system
- You can make a difference in your care, today
 - Establish an equal partnership with your doctor
 - Focus on your diagnosis
 - Make sure your doctor is listening
 - Understand every test ordered
 - Ask all questions before you leave
- Final follow-up



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