

Cooking up Family Medicine: A Metaphorical Kitchen Guide for Medical Training and Clinical Practice. 2. "Meatballs" (Holism)

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Abstract:

The family doctor is the general practitioner who assumes the responsibility of attending to the patient in a comprehensive, biopsychosocial, contextualized manner, focusing on family and community, with continuous care, without selecting patients based on age, sex, disease, organs or body systems. Family medicine training can often feel like a massive, overwhelming banquet of information, and the concepts and theories that belong to family medicine are often difficult to explain and understand. Here, these concepts are explained through metaphors—a way of transforming a concept into something suggestive, interesting, and surprising—, irony—which implies that what is said is not what is meant—, and humor, which can be therapeutic. The series of short articles, "Cooking Up Family Medicine: A Metaphorical Kitchen Guide for Medical Training and Clinical Practice," is thus an ironic metaphor that breaks down the complexity, offering a refreshing, bite-sized approach to the foundational concepts every family doctor must master. It is a series of 10 short chapters / metaphorical and ironic cooking recipes." Inside these metaphorical cookbook articles, you won't find instructions for roasting chicken or baking bread. Instead, you will discover concise, ironic, and highly practical "recipes" designed to help you easily digest and internalize core clinical principles. Each article serves as a quick-to-read kitchen lesson, transforming abstract family medicine theories into actionable for your daily clinical practice. These series of articles provide the perfect ingredients to sharpen your clinical intuition—one delicious concept at a time. This article presents the recipe for "Meatballs (Holism). Bon Appétit, Doctor!

Keywords: holistic care; ironía; metaphor; medical training; clinical practice; general practitioner; family medicine

Introduction

The academic discipline of family medicine is unique and coherent. It possesses knowledge, skills, and attitudes common to other clinical specialties, community medicine, behavioral sciences, and social sciences. However, it uses them in a particular way, thus constituting a recognizable, unified, specific, and differentiated set of skills [1]. But, concepts belonging to family medicine are often difficult to explain and understand.

Metaphors enable us to understand something that is unknown in terms of its familiarity [2-5]. Irony is also a very useful educational tool [6], as it stimulates critical thinking and fosters self-reflection [7, 8]. And the respectful use of humor is important in medical practice [9-11].

Traditional medical textbooks treat knowledge like an assembly line: rigid, serious, and cold. This series of articles adopts a different approach. We treat family medicine like a kitchen. Why a kitchen? Because being a great family doctor is not so much about blindly following a strict protocol, but about knowing how to balance the ingredients. It takes a dash of clinical intuition,

a generous dose of empathy, a solid foundation in evidence-based medicine, and, occasionally, a pinch of irony and humor to get through the day. Within these articles, you won't find instructions on how to bake a soufflé. Instead, you'll find a collection of concise, metaphorical "recipes" designed to help you "cook up" the core concepts of family medicine. So, wash your hands, put on your apron (or white coat), and let's get cooking! Bon appétit, doctor. In this scenario, here is the recipe for Meatballs" (Holism).

Meatballs (Holism)

The meatball is the perfect symbol of holism in Family Medicine: It is a fusion. The individual ingredients (meat, breadcrumbs, spices) lose their identity to form a higher entity. The flavor is the result of synergy. The whole is unity. You cannot distinguish where the meat ends and the breadcrumbs begin; the flavor is a total fusion where you can no longer separate the ingredients (the biological, the psychological, the social) because they have formed a new unity. Once cooked, it is impossible to separate the ingredients of the meatball; it is like organic and mental illnesses, they are so inextricably mixed that they cannot be separated; if you eat one, you are also eating the

Ingredients

- 250 g of chopped Organic-Based Diseases
- 250 g of chopped Psychological-Based Diseases
- 2 Cerebral Hemispheres (the logical and the artistic)
- 1 cup of Patient Context
- 2 cc of Pattern Recognition in Contexts, finely chopped
- Continuity of Care in the Same Place and with a Single Medical Record, grated
- Longitudinal Care by the Same Doctor (enough to soak the crumb of Continuity)
- 1 cup of Doctor-Patient Trust
- 1 Experience
- 1 Common Sense
- 1 Ethics
- 30 cc of Strategic Planning
- 1/2 glass of Organic and Mental Disease Broth
- A few sprigs of Patient Participation
- 50 g of Family Factors
- 2 Work Factors
- 1 Social Factor
- Salt

Preparation

-Make a dough with the crushed Patient Context and the Continuity of Care, moistened and drained. Add the two Cerebral Hemispheres, salt, Pattern Recognition in Contexts, and knead with the finely chopped or diced Organic and Mental Illnesses to form meatballs. Pass them through the Doctor-Patient Trust process and fry in a saucepan with oil. In the same oil, add the meatballs, Experience, Common Sense, Emotion, and Ethics, all peeled and chopped. Sauté well and add Strategic Planning. Let it simmer for 20 minutes, add the broth of Organic and Mental Illnesses or water to cover, and the Patient Participation. Cook until done, allowing the sauce to reduce. Shortly before serving, add the Family Factors, the diced fried Work Factors, and the grated Social Factor.

Time

Requires ongoing care for individuals and families

Cost

Medium-High; requires ongoing care tools (medical history, effective doctor-patient relationship, etc.)

Precautions and Contraindications

Physical and mental health problems are inextricably intertwined, and improvement in one improves the other. However, some health problems are predominantly organic and others predominantly mental, and differential interventions may be appropriate.

Concept Of Holism

Holism, integrality and systemic medical approach are terms that partly overlap and can be difficult to differentiate. 1) Holism ("The Meatball"): It is a fusion. The individual ingredients (meat, breadcrumbs, spices) lose their identity to form a higher entity. The flavor is the result of synergy. The whole is unity. You cannot see where the meat ends and the breadcrumbs begin; the flavor is total fusion; 2) Comprehensive/integrated/Wholeness: It's a complete collection. Each element is distinct and perfectly placed, and its value lies in the fact that the selection is so broad that no gap is left unfilled. It is the completeness. Everything is present and organized, but each element maintains its separate physical identity. While the holistic approach focuses on the essence of the whole and its interactions, the integral approach ensures that all pieces of the puzzle are present so that nothing is missing; 3) Systemic: Relationships. The parts are distinguishable. Systemic thinking is an approach focused on understanding how things are interconnected within a certain notion of a complete entity. Systemic thinking is a comprehensive plus holistic approach that analyzes the interconnected elements of a system to understand its complexity [12, 13]. Holistic ("whole," "entire"; "the whole is more than the sum of its parts") and comprehensive/integrated ("total" or "complete"; something that includes all the elements necessary to be complete; it seeks to leave "no stone unturned," ensuring that every specific aspect is addressed) are synonymous terms in practice, and both refer to considering something as a whole, complete, or total. Both approaches seek to understand the interconnectedness of all parts (physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual) rather than focusing on just one of them. Although often used interchangeably, holistic and integral have different philosophical and practical nuances. The main distinction lies in whether the approach focuses on the "whole" as a unit (holistic) or on the "sum of all parts" to complete a system (integral).

Jan Christian Smuts, in "Holism and Evolution" (1926), coined the term holism. Prior to the economic depression on Wall Street, this South African statesman formulated the first definition of holism in 1926: "It is a process of creative synthesis or progressive construction of increasingly complex structural units that tend toward the formation of a whole." With the term "holism," he described nature's tendency to form "wholes" that are greater than the sum of their parts. He proposed that evolution is a creative process driven by the unification of structures, from inorganic matter to complex organisms and the human mind, influencing each other. Holistic focuses on interconnectedness. For example, a holistic approach to health; that is, looking at the whole individual [14-17].

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