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## Empathetic doctors get results

DOCTORS who use an empathetic voice with patients can elicit more information about their problems and encourage them to stick to their treatment regimen, a Monash University researcher has found. Dr Marisa Cordella, from Monash's school of languages, cultures and linguistics, analysed how doctors and patients talked to each other and found that doctors mainly used three voices when talking to patients: the doctor voice for seeking information; educator voice when seeking to inform and educate the patient about their condition; and the fellow human voice when trying to get patients to talk about their problems. More often than not, the doctor and educator voices prevailed, but better results were gained from doctors who had learnt how to get patients to talk about themselves and prior medical treatments and conditions, Dr Cordella says. Patients were also more likely to undertake preventive measures to maintain their health. The study showed women were better at communicating to doctors than men and were more likely to visit the doctor more frequently.

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