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ten questions

MONASH University language specialist Marisa Cordella has written a new book to help doctors and health professionals improve communication with patients.

Dr Cordella, of Glen Waverley, said the success of medical consultation was often a two-way street.

Dr Cordella, right, took time to answer the *Leader's* 10 Questions.

What is the title of your book? *The dynamic consultation: A discourse analytical study of doctor-patient communication.*

What do you hope to achieve with your book?

Create awareness that communication between doctors and patients can be improved.

What audience does it target? It is mainly targeted to health providers such as doctors, nurses, counsellors but also social workers and any other professionals interested in understanding what makes good communication possible.

How does it differ from other patient education books produced by doctors? The book emphasises the role of both doctor and patient in communication during a consultation. From that point of view, it is an unbiased book.

What are the main communication messages in the book? Communication is a two-way process where both doctor and patient play a vital role in the

outcome of the consultation. So better consultations are those where the doctor is clear, informative and sensitive, whereas the patient is knowledgeable, inquisitive and constructive.

What motivated you to write the book?

After carrying out my study and also having had very in-depth contacts with health systems of two countries, I decided that a linguist could make a useful contribution to improving doctor-patient communication in the community at large.

‘I would hope that nobody ever loses their sense of optimism.’

If you could change one thing in life, what would it be? I would hope that

nobody ever loses their sense of optimism.

What would you do with \$1 million? I'd donate some of the money to cancer and AIDS research, invest some and use the rest to travel to archeological sites in Latin America.

What is your favourite book?

Authors of the magic realism movement such as Gabriel Garcia Marquez.

Do you have a favourite film?

I love films by (Pedro) Almodovar and (Federico) Fellini.

If you could have one wish, what would it be? Of course I would wish everybody could have good health and, when we don't, access to quality medical care.

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