

Episode: *Author Interview: “What Should “Shopping” Look Like in Actual Practice?”*

Guest: Nisha M. Patel, MD, MPH

Host: Tim Hoff

Transcript by: Cheryl Green

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[bright theme music]

TIM HOFF: Welcome to another episode of the *Author Interview series* from the *American Medical Association Journal of Ethics*. I'm your host, Tim Hoff. This series provides an alternative format for accessing the interesting and important work being done by Journal contributors each month. Joining me on this episode is Dr Nisha Patel, a practicing primary care physician and Assistant Professor of General Internal Medicine at the University of Florida in Gainesville. She's here to discuss her article, coauthored with Drs Jesse Ehrenfeld and Brian Miller, *What Should “Shopping” Look Like in Actual Practice?*, in the November 2022 issue of the Journal, [How Much Will It Cost?](#) Dr Patel, thank you so much for being on the podcast with me. [music fades out]

DR NISHA PATEL: It's great to be here. Thank you for having me.

HOFF: So, to begin with, what's the main ethics point of your article?

PATEL: So, I think that all boils down to one point, which is that health professionals have the ethical responsibility to use the patient's dollar well. So first, we should consider it our ethical responsibility to lessen financial burden for our patients and on our health care system. But second, as we encourage price transparency initiatives in our legislation and through daily conversations with our patients, we should make sure that we're avoiding unintentional consequences by being specific about defining what a shoppable service is and also pairing that cost information with quality information so that patients can shop for their value.

HOFF: And so, what do you see as the most important thing for health professions students and trainees to take from this article?

PATEL: If you're a learner, remember that learning about delivering cost-effective care goes hand in hand with learning how to provide quality care. And it's also important to know where your patients are at and consider the tools that they have available to make their own decisions and compare their options. Are you able to navigate those same tools, and do those tools provide useful information? So, take time to look through your own insurance website, clinic procedures, or hospital chargemaster. Having this information in your back pocket can really help you and your patients feel comfortable with that shared decision-making conversation and help your patient follow through on your treatment recommendation because they are aware of their treatment plan and their costs moving forward. Cost is very much an important factor when patients make treatment decisions, whether we like it or not, and that gets into respecting their autonomy for making that decision. So, health professionals are responsible for considering the financial well-being of their patients and being stewards of that health care dollar.

HOFF: And finally, if you could add a point to this article, what would that be?

PATEL: I think it's important to note that all of these price transparency efforts will take time to show their full effect. So, as we support this movement, we do need to keep gathering data on the cost and the quality of health care services. We need to further refine quality metrics as it relates to our patients. And health professionals and trainees can help with this research and the advocacy for price transparency as this changes over time and along the way. [theme music returns]

HOFF: Dr Patel, thank you so much for your time on the podcast today and thanks to you and your coauthors for your contribution to the Journal this month.

PATEL: Thank you so much for having me.

HOFF: To read the full article as well as the rest of the November 2022 issue for free, visit our site, [JournalofEthics.org](https://www.journalofethics.org). We'll be back soon with more *Ethics Talk* from the *American Medical Association Journal of Ethics*.