appreciate this future role if physicians consider, as part of their treatment, a continuum from providing information and knowledge, to explaining and educating, to advising during shared decision-making, to counseling for grief, life change, or personal crisis, to praying or deep intention to heal. What is remarkable and hopeful is the extent to which this already occurs in the practice of physicians, though often unrecognized.

**Health Advisor and Wellness Coach**

The fifth future role is the health advisor and wellness coach. Dr Morrison predicts that “the worried well could be soothed electronically through convenient and timely electronic information exchange with their physician.” While this may occur, I see the continued vital place for a physician’s soothing in person-to-person interactions when the physician listens attentively, carefully, and empathetically. Although this essential human connection happens now, it occurs in a “physical medicine” context, so that physicians view this activity from annoying and ineffective to threatening and personally overwhelming rather than of high value. In a “personal medicine” context this high touch interpersonal approach is “the value” many seek and regard as medical care. As Internet use produces healthcare at a distance, this further disconnection of patient from doctor may leave people at a personal or emotional distance too great to sustain the relationship necessary for advice, medical decisions, and caring behaviors.

**Conclusion**

New high technology is making an increasingly important contribution to the future of medicine. To counterbalance and complement its physical and emotional effects on patients and physicians, new high touch appears to be a solution to this dilemma, and one that rediscovers the person in the doctor and the patient.

References

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