



PATIENT EXAMINATION GUIDELINES

The AMA believes that Medical Practitioners have a duty to act, at all times, in an ethical and professional manner towards patients and communication is integral to the doctor/patient relationship.

In order to enhance good communication and minimise misunderstandings between Medical Practitioners and patients, the AMA, in conjunction with Health Consumers' Council, had developed the following guidelines.

Patient Examination

As part of good medical practice, it is important to recognise that a substantial number of Medical Practitioners, particularly GPs, have long standing patient relationships. Where there is a long standing relationship, the doctor may view it as unnecessary to follow the guidelines to the letter.

a) Explanation to the Patient

Prior to commencing the examination the Medical Practitioners should:

1. Advise the patient the reason for the physical examination and the risks if the examination is not done.
2. In the event that there is cultural, religious or gender disharmony between the doctor and the patient, the doctor should consider offering the patient the opportunity to be referred to another Medical Practitioner.
3. The Medical Practitioner should always consider whether it is appropriate to offer the patient the support of a relative or chaperone during the examination. If at any stage the patient indicates such a desire, their wish should be supported.
4. In keeping with good medical practice, explain these matters in a culturally and linguistically sensitive manner. This may involve the use of an Interpreter.

b) Physical Examination

1. The patient's modesty should be always respected and protected during the examination.
2. A Medical Practitioner should provide a sheet, gown or other garment to preserve the patient's modesty.
3. The Medical Practitioner should respect the modesty and feelings of the patient by ensuring that they may undress and dress with appropriate privacy.