

Ethics After Hours



Diagnosis - Episode 5, A Question of Trust Documentary

Summary¹

'A Question of Trust' is the fifth episode in the Netflix documentary series *Diagnosis*, which is based on Dr. Lisa Sanders' column in the New York Times. In this episode we meet Lashay, a 17-year-old girl who is not able to hold down anything she eats or drinks. Dr. Sanders turns to crowdsourcing for advice regarding a possible diagnosis given Lashay's symptoms. The crowd's suggestions point toward a diagnosis that Lashay has already been given by her own doctors, but Lashay and her family are leery of the crowd's advice. The way Lashay's possible diagnosis was communicated to her has left her feeling judged by her medical providers and the family's reluctance to accept the diagnosis appears to be due to a lack of trust in the medical profession.

Duration: 44 minutes

Cast: Lisa Sanders.

Released: August 16, 2019

Available on Netflix (Original Netflix Production)

Questions for discussion:

- Based on your own experience, what do you see as the biggest barriers to communication between doctors and patients?
- In the beginning of the episode Dr. Sanders gives an example from her own life of what she perceives as bad communication by a doctor who is uncomfortable with delivering bad news. Discuss different strategies to tackle challenging conversations with patients, such as delivering bad news.
- What was your reaction to Dr. Coleby's evaluation of the challenges he has with Lashay's parents in terms of moving forward with the suggested treatment options he has proposed for Lashay?
- Lashay was dismissive of the first diagnosis she received because she felt judged and not listened to by her doctor. Do you think patients' comprehension of the advice of their doctors would be better if the doctors' listening skills were improved?
- What do you see as the connection between communication skills and ethics?

¹ This summary is adapted from Netflix's webpage.

- Towards the end, Dr. Sanders has a difficult conversation with Lashay and her mom about their reluctance to accept the offer of treatment proposed by the crowd and about the risks associated with keeping the chest port in place and using IV fluids as treatment.
 - What do you think about how Dr. Sanders tackles this situation?
- Considering everything Lashay has been through in terms of medical tests and treatment, can you understand her parent's reluctance to enrol her in the suggested treatment program?