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Patients initiating talk about their health concerns

5:00 - 7:00 pm Haines Hall 352

Wednesday, October 7, 2009

Much of the research literature on medical (doctor-patient) interaction is concerned, understandably, with medical authority, arising from doctors' medical knowledge and expertise. Studies of doctor-patient interactions focus on how medical authority is manifested and maintained in the consultation. So medical authority is linked to control over the interaction, through the interview format of the consultation - according to which patient participation is limited to answering questions. In this way, the agenda is set by the doctor/professional, so that patient concerns are subordinated; the patient's 'unvoiced agenda' is (putatively) sidelined. This talk presents some alternative evidence, and focuses on ways in which patients in ENT oncology and diabetes clinics manage to 'break free from' the constraints of the interview format through expansions, and particularly through initiating health matters that concern them, unsolicited by doctors' questions.