



The Patient Wanted to Play Tennis Again. I Wanted to Know Why He Couldn't.

By Dr. Lindita Hobdari

"My tennis game is becoming a challenge. I get short of breath," a patient told me. Someone had told him it was just part of getting older. But he knew something had changed, and I believed him. We looked into it. A cardiac evaluation found serious coronary disease, and he ultimately needed four stents.

I still think about that visit. I have been a physician for more than 27 years, and I have cared for Naples families for nearly two decades. When a patient tells me something has changed, I pay attention. He wanted to play tennis again. That was his goal. My responsibility was to understand why he could not. I listen to the patient's goal first, and then I look at the whole person. Sometimes the answer is straightforward. Sometimes, as it was for him, the story takes us somewhere much more serious.

When a patient asks me about weight loss

Patients ask me about weight loss injections all the time, and I understand why. GLP-1 medicines can be very helpful for the right person. What concerns me is how easy it is to buy into a promise before anyone has really looked at your health. The FDA has warned about misleading promotion of some unapproved products and dosing errors with compounded semaglutide. A medicine that affects your body deserves more attention than an online checkout.

When we sit down together, I want to know your medical history, the medicines you take and what you have tried before. Some GLP-1 products should not be used if you or a family member has had medullary thyroid cancer, or if you have MEN2. We also discuss problems to watch for, including pancreatitis and gallbladder symptoms. Then we make a plan for dosing, nutrition, maintaining muscle and checking in as treatment goes on.

I start by asking, "What are you hoping to change?" For one person it is keeping up with grandchildren; for another it is getting blood sugar under control or feeling strong again. Then I look at what may be getting in the way. If we decide a GLP-1 medicine is appropriate, I want to know how you are tolerating it, whether you are eating enough protein and how we are protecting your muscle. That follow-up is part of the treatment.



A conversation about testosterone

The same is true of testosterone. Patients bring me products a friend recommended or hormones they started elsewhere, sometimes without anyone checking how they are responding. I ask them to show me everything they take. There is no judgment; I want to know what is happening in their bodies. In men, testosterone can raise the red blood cell count, and breast symptoms may call for an estradiol assessment. A blood donation or anastrozole is not an automatic answer. In women, too much testosterone can cause acne, facial hair, scalp hair loss or even a deeper voice. We look at the dose, symptoms and labs together. I do not want a patient left guessing whether a treatment is helping or causing harm.

When I refer you to a specialist

I built Hobdari Family Health around that kind of attention. We care for children, adults and older family members, and our physicians and advanced practice providers share my belief that you must listen before you decide what to do. We manage chronic conditions and preventive care and offer on-site diagnostic and laboratory services. When I refer someone to a cardiologist or surgeon, I do not consider my job finished. I want to know what the specialist found, make sure the patient understands the next step and continue caring for the rest of their health. That is the standard I ask of our whole team.

Why I brought functional medicine into the picture

As a family physician, I also hear patients say, "My tests are normal, but I do not feel like myself." I do not dismiss that. I want to understand their sleep, nutrition, stress, hormones and everything else that might be affecting how they feel. That is why I built Naples Functional Medicine Healing. It gives us room to explore those questions in depth, while Hobdari Family Health continues to be the patient's medical home. For me, primary care and functional medicine belong in the same conversation.

Depending on the person, that care may include medically supervised weight loss, hormone replacement therapy, acupuncture, selected peptide therapies, hyperbaric oxygen therapy in our FDA-cleared chamber, or wellness infusions such as Myers' cocktail, NAD⁺ and glutathione. I do not expect every patient to need these services. We talk through which options, if any, fit your goals and health history.

"Holistic Healing, Not Hype" grew out of the conversations I have with patients every day. I am interested in new approaches, but I always ask: What does the research actually show? Is this safe for this particular patient? Who is following the results? If you have heard about a treatment and want to discuss it, bring it to me. I would much rather talk it through with you than have you try it alone.

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, so let me ask you what I ask my patients: When was your last mammogram? If you've been putting it off, tell me. Maybe life got busy, or maybe you're worried about what it might find. We can talk through that together. I also want to know if you've noticed a change in your breasts or if breast cancer runs in your family. We'll decide what screening makes sense for you, and if anything needs a closer look, I'll help you with the next step.

Come talk with us

Hobdari Family Health has offices in Naples and Bonita Springs. We welcome eligible Lee Health employees and their families through the Best Care Alliance network. When our participation with Blue Cross and Blue Shield ended this past February, I didn't want patients who had trusted us for years to feel they had to leave, so we offered \$100 self-pay visit option for anyone who wanted to continue their care with us. We also offer self-pay, fee-for-service visits for uninsured patients and same-day appointments when openings are available. Our team can help you confirm plan benefits, provider participation or self-pay pricing when you schedule. You can come to us with a symptom that has been brushed aside, a treatment you have questions about or simply the feeling that something is off. Tell me what you want to be able to do again. We will listen, look carefully and make a plan together. And when the next step involves a specialist or a new treatment, we will stay part of the conversation.

Dr. Lindita Hobdari is a family physician and founder of Hobdari Family Health and Naples Functional Medicine Healing. Hobdari Family Health serves patients in Naples and Bonita Springs.

Learn more at hobdarihealth.com and naplesfunctionalhealing.com.



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