TOP TEN SCIENTIFIC REASONS WHY COMPASSION IS GREAT MEDICINE

1. COMPASSION CHANGES PATIENTS' PHYSIOLOGY
   Non-verbal communication of compassion directly affects patients' autonomic nervous system, breathing, heart rate variation (HRV), reduces stress and increases peacefulness.

2. COMPASSION REDUCES PAIN
   After an empathetic pre-op consultation, patients have better surgical outcomes, better wound healing, use half the dose of morphine and go home earlier (randomized controlled trials).

3. COMPASSION REDUCES READMISSIONS
   When patients are given compassionate care in the ER they are 30% less likely to return to the ER for the same problem (randomized controlled trial).

4. COMPASSION PROLONGS SURVIVAL
   Patients with terminal lung cancer with early access to compassionate palliative care have better quality of life, less depression, fewer interventions, reduced cost of care, and survive on average 30% longer (randomized controlled trial).

5. COMPASSION REDUCES MORTALITY
   Having a caring doctor cuts the five-year risk of a heart attack more than aspirin, and reduces overall mortality more than smoking cessation (meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials).

6. COMPASSION IMPROVES GLUCOSE CONTROL
   Diabetic patients who rate their doctors as ‘high empathy' have 42% fewer emergency admissions to hospital.

7. COMPASSION IMPROVES TRAUMA OUTCOMES
   Surgical trauma patients who rated their doctor ‘high empathy' were twenty times more likely to report good outcomes six weeks after discharge.

8. COMPASSION INCREASES PATIENT ADHERENCE
   Patient adherence with treatment is 62% higher when the physician has been trained in empathetic doctor-patient communication (meta-analysis).

9. COMPASSION BOOSTS IMMUNE FUNCTION
   Patients with the common cold who receive an empathetic consultation have less severe symptoms, recover earlier and have greater changes in IL-6 and neutrophil count.

10. COMPASSION REDUCES HEALTH COSTS
    Total costs of healthcare in the whole system are 30% lower when the primary care doctor provides 'above median' patient-centered care.

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References


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