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October 1, 2017*

## **Doctors Are Not Scientists**

I had practiced medicine over 20 years before understanding that doctors are not scientists. I had spent several years studying science, even before medical training, so I thought I was a scientist! However, I was attending a Functional Medicine conference when a fellow physician explained to the group that although we use the tools of science, doctors are actually *clinicians*. He explained that science demands *proof* and the ability to *measure* a result. The results must be reproducible -- meaning that others must be able to study your data and get the same findings. Otherwise, it will not be accepted science.

He explained that whereas there are some things that can be measured (like weight, height, blood pressure, blood sugar, etc.), many important things cannot. For example, one of the most common reasons for visiting a doctor is for pain. Physicians all over the globe are treating this thing called pain. Understand that doctors have no way to objectively measure or to prove pain. So, what are doctors doing if they have no proof? People go to the doctor and tell them a story (called a history). Doctors look for corroborating exam findings and sometimes testing, but often find none. So, they just believe the patient and assign a name to the story (called a diagnosis) and try to help them. It's that simple! I have no objective test to prove a migraine, but I can certainly diagnose one. It's a clinical diagnosis. It's made from the patient's story.

Pain and fatigue fall into the same unprovable category. Have you ever heard of a pain-o-meter or a fatigue-o-meter to measure pain or fatigue? No, they don't exist because science is limited in its ability to prove some things. But, are patients crazy for complaining of pain and fatigue? Are doctors crazy for trying to treat it?

Many doctors still think of themselves as scientists. Realizing that I am not a scientist was the most liberating idea of my adult life and my life as a physician! If I were to wait for scientific proof of everything, I would be useless for my patients -- especially anyone suffering from pain! Knowing that I am not in the "Prove It"

business allowed me to move past the limits of science. The scientists would have me believe that if something cannot be proved scientifically, then it does not exist. Now I know better. If you were to query scientists about their own thoughts, feelings and beliefs and asked for objective proof of such, they could provide none. However, I am sure that like all of us, they have thoughts feelings and beliefs. Thoughts and feelings are not amenable to scientific study. However, they are very real and the drivers of all our behaviors and physical manifestations.

The paradox is that we are living in an era of so called, evidence-based medicine, whereby doctors are supposed to have scientific evidence of all that they do and recommend. How about that!

*In Good Health,  
Maxine*

About Dr. Maxine J. Thomas, M.D.

Maxine has a private Functional Medicine Practice in Greenville, Texas. She is passionate about incorporating holistic modalities into the healthcare treatment and plan for her patients.

To learn more about Maxine, please visit [www.drmaxinethomas.com](http://www.drmaxinethomas.com) or call (903) 450-9120 to schedule a consultation.

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