Many of us were raised on the multiple-choice approach to knowledge. This method is frequently used for tests in medical school and on Board examinations. Too often, it is the fashion of teaching at the bedside as well: “Name three other things that present like ...” or “List five etiologic factors in ...”. One might object to calling this an approach to knowledge, saying that it does not produce literate, erudite, scholarly, intellectual, or polished physicians—words usually associated with the idea of knowledge. In fact, knowledge is not the word most often used to describe what is necessary to answer examinations, bedside quizzes, or even the questions of patients. What is wanted is information, and information is just what we get. Information is available everywhere you look or listen, it pours out at us from every crack and cranny. Make no mistake, I believe that this endless flow of information is marvelous, but there are problems.
Why should the doctor expensively scribble down information when the patient can do a little free secretarial work instead? Alas, beware the doctor who does not review that questionnaire with you very carefully, taking an active interest in every little check mark. It turns out that the pathway into the medical brain, like most brains, is far more reliable when it runs from the hand than from the eye. Force the doctor to take notes, and the doctor will usually remember. Ask the doctor to read, and the doctor will scan, skip, elide, omit and often forget. The same problem dogs other efforts to Medical- and non-medical professionals alike have fallen for this book on instilling mindfulness in the practice. Take a look at the intimate and groundbreaking work doctors who are putting compassion and patient-centered focus first have uncovered. Dr. Epstein’s book stems from his own clinical rotations during Harvard Medical School when he saw a seasoned surgeon not even notice when a patient’s kidney turned blue and what happens when being on autopilot takes over. How many books can you complete in between seeing patients and tending to your own health? Remember that reading is a mental workout, so you’re already on the fast track to improving your well-being. Emily is an experienced content writer. Why doctors should read this book. . . . 11 Discussion for physicians . . . 11 The pressures of managed care . . . Traditional media (e.g., medical books and journals) have a good editorial process in place that ensures that what is in them is accurate as far as it goes. This process works about 90% of the time. The major problem is that the process is somewhat political, so controversial things - as all new discoveries are - do not show up here for some time.