Generation Rx: Healthcare Provider Case Study

Please note: this case study is written as an exaggeration.

JS is a 44 yo WF who requested a new patient appointment at the local Family Medicine Clinic. She was recently in a minor traffic accident and has been experiencing some neck pain since the incident, but is otherwise healthy. Upon arrival at the clinic, a nurse takes JS’s vitals and asks for a list of her current medications. JS states that she takes a multivitamin and Motrin sometimes to help with the pain. The doctor, who seems in a rush, examines JS. After asking her to describe her pain, which is a 5 on a scale of 1 to 10, he prescribes her ninety Percocet 5 mg, 1 to 2 tablets three to four times a day PRN. He does not schedule her a follow-up appointment, but tells her to come back if the pain does not resolve.

JS leaves the clinic and goes straight to the pharmacy to fill her prescription. At the pharmacy, a technician takes her prescription and asks her to take a seat. Fifteen minutes later, the technician calls JS up to the counter to get her new medication, where she pays for her prescription and heads home.

At first, JS only needs one pill to effectively ease her pain, but she soon learns that two or even three pills really makes her feel better. She discovers it also helps to take them a little more frequently. When her husband sprains his ankle, JS gives him a few of her Percocet to help him relax and to avoid the cost of another doctor’s visit.

A week after her initial appointment, JS tries to make a new appointment with her doctor to get a refill, but he cannot see her for three weeks. She makes the appointment, but then decides she cannot go three weeks without her medication because she is afraid her neck will start hurting again. She makes an appointment at another clinic, hoping the new doctor will give her enough Percocet to get her through until her next appointment.

Please consider the following questions regarding this case:

1. What mistakes occurred in this patient’s case?
2. What would you have done differently?
3. What stereotypes lead you to think certain ways about patients?