GUEST EDITORIAL

Doctor-Patient Relationship - A Changing Perspective Holistic Approach

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Medical profession is one of the most noble professions of mankind since times immemorial. Despite the fact that it is losing its sheen & sanctity in these turbulent modern times, still it ranks one among the most respected professions. The importance of the Doctor, as described by late Dr. Michal Balint, an internationally renowned Psychoanalyst, described the value of Doctors professionalism in his book, “The Doctor, his patient and the Illness” in the following words “By far the most frequently used medicine in medical practice was the Doctor himself. It was not only the bottle of Elixir or the box of pills or injections that mattered, but the way the Doctor gave them to the patients. In fact, the whole atmosphere in which the drug is given and taken.”

By the grace of Almighty I have been associated with this profession since 6 long decades and had been a silent witness to see many changes and variations in the way this profession is being practiced over the years. Doctor was deemed next to God in those olden days, which was the golden era of medical profession with respect to the Doctor- Patient relationship matters. Not so much respect or blind faith is seen these days, owing to many factors contributing to the change in the mindset of Public towards the Doctors and medical Profession.

Factors like increasing commercialization and privatization of medical profession, increased cost of treatments, media projection of doctors and medical profession in poor light, also the impact of social media, false propaganda against doctors & medical profession, all are contributing to the faded image of this great profession. Increasing influence of Quackery and middle-men system is also severely tarnishing the image of our profession. Because of the intense competition being faced by the practicing Doctors, especially the new comers, they are often forced to resort to such illegal practices for their practice and survival.

As one of the senior most Doctors and Surgeons of this Telangana State, I would like to give some suggestions and recommendations to the younger fraternity of doctors to improve Doctor-Patient relationships and overall improvement of the image and outcome of their practice & profession. I had the privilege to go through a beautiful book which addressed this issue few years back when I visited Mount Abu (Rajasthan) as a part of one of my personal spiritual trip. I shall share the wisdom from that book also here. First I would like to emphasize that all Doctors should aim to practice Holistic Medicine which is the need of the hour. That includes taking a Holistic History, Coming to a Holistic Diagnosis with minimal possible investigations, understanding the family and cultural back ground of the patients and developing a significant Social Support System network for the patients. Patients have to be offered Holistic treatment in a congenial environment.

Coming to the basic practicing Etiquette like, addressing the patient by name with a smile on our face when the patient first enters into the consultation room and having the patience to listen to what the patient says and eliciting proper history and advising necessary investigations. After coming to provisional clinical diagnosis, explain the same to the patient properly in a balanced way in simple words with empathy towards the patient and his/her family members. Have the patience and never lose temper with patients even though they may irritate us some times by their ignorance, arrogance and repeated questions and sometimes with Googled (half)
knowledge these days. Also last but not least because of the suffering they are having due to the illness.

Professional jealousy & rivalry is another sensitive issue, which needs to be addressed. As practicing Doctors, we all are under the divine Hippocratic oath, to protect the respect and professional Dignity of our colleague Doctors. Never criticize other Doctors or their treatment. Don't talk ill of them in front of patients or their attendants. It might boomerang on you one day, never forget that, we all are sailing in the same boat. So have courteous & friendly relations with your doctor colleagues.

Another worrying aspect of medical professionals these days is, they are constantly under severe stress and unable to balance their personal & professional lives. Increasing professional competitiveness, financial issues and stress of high public expectation on our profession is adding burden to the already over burdened Doctors. Unfortunately many young Doctors are unable to handle this stress and some are even ending their precious lives causing irreplaceable damage to their family, medical profession and the society as a whole.

All young doctors should be trained to keep their body & mind fit by regular Physical Exercise and Yoga and Meditation on regular basis. It is high time, all should realize the importance to handle the stress. Don't over indulge in profession. Have time for yourself and your family, near and dear ones. Groom your hobbies, spend time in the Nature, and connect with Almighty with the habit of regular prayer (or) Meditation. I always tell my junior colleagues about importance of laughter in our lives to keep up good spirits in life. Don't take life too seriously, take one day at a time. Think like you are an Actor on this great world stage and just do your duty to the best of your abilities. Indulge in social service activities which bring purpose to your life. Encourage your peers and colleagues and help them when needed. Do not forget, you are a special person and you make this world a better place by your precious presence and by your acts of love and kindness.

Since almost last 2 years entire Mankind have been facing the Covid-19 Pandemic. Almost more than 50 lakh precious human lives are lost world wide, having their kith & kin who are left to face this harsh world without the support of their loved ones, even though various Government and Social welfare Organizations, extending their sympathetic support. We have learnt many lessons from Covid-19 Pandemic. It has shown the common public, the importance and sacrifices of Medical profession for the welfare of the community.

I would like to thank, TS-IMA, for giving me this opportunity to express my self & share my inner feelings to my beloved Medical Fraternity. I hope that you all would find my words useful. God Bless you all.

OM SHANtHI….

End Note

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