

The Grass Is Always Greener on the Other Side – The Undisclosed Side of Doctors

Manoj M. Ramugade¹, Dharna B. Parekh²

¹(Associate Professor, Department of Conservative Dentistry and Endodontics, Government Dental College and Hospital, Mumbai, India

²(Private Practitioner, Pinky's Dental Care, Borivali West, Mumbai, India)

Corresponding Author: Manoj M. Ramugade

Abstract: Saving lives is a noble profession and doctors are highly dedicated to it. Doctors are the respectful and an indispensable part of the society. They are getting stressed physically and mentally due to strenuous working and sleepless nights on duty. One side they are considered as God whereas they were being blamed and assaulted for unknown reasons by the patient and their relatives. Dramatic situations existed in our country making them heroes and villain in a click of a moment. Thus, its need of an hour to understand the situation from the doctor's perspective and at the same time care for them and respect their invaluable efforts in the betterment of social health and well-being.

Keywords: Doctor, Doctor-patient relationship, Health disorders, Stress

Date of Submission: 26-12-2018

Date of acceptance: 11-01-2019

I. Introduction

Increasing research, knowledge and introduction of newer promising medicines have increased the lifespan of an average person to 70 years on one side whereas; the clinical scenario shows the decrease in the life expectancy of doctors to about 60-70 years. Why such a controversial picture existed in the medical field? Are the doctors negligent for their own health? Or Are they unaware of this fact? or Do they have much more to earn than their own health and the life?

All such questions arise when there is a marked discrepancy between the working pattern and the self-care practised by the health professionals. Globally, the health care providers work dedicatedly to provide the best possible health services to their needy patients. They even work continuously and having sleepless nights for about 72 hours; especially in the critical care doctors and residents. Government-owned or aided health care centres have abundant patients where there exist a clear mismatch of the proportion between the number of patients to the number of available doctors and allied staff. To provide health to every poor and needy; doctors work beyond their stipulated working hours without any monetary or personal gain in their mind.¹⁻³

Medicine is a science where doctors have to deal with live human beings and by virtue of their noble profession they are exposed to plethora of stresses and emotions. They forget to take their meals on time, leading to gastric diseases, diabetes and other cardiovascular disturbances. They also have been suffered from musculoskeletal disorders as an occupational hazard. At the same time, continuous working, mental and physical stress, legal allegations from unsatisfied patients and even recently the physical assaults to doctors cause detrimental effects on the overall living and quality life of the doctors.

Though laws become strict; they are not sufficient to protect a genuine health care provider. Due to working in such a life-threatening environment, stress and neglect to oneself; doctors become an easy prey to various health disorders like diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular diseases, acidity, musculoskeletal problems or even communicable infectious diseases. Current scenario showed more cases of suicide and early deaths in doctors due to over-stress and exhaustion.

A study in rural British Columbia reported about 80% of physicians suffered with higher degree of emotional exhaustion, 61% had disorder of depersonalisation, and 44% had moderate to low feelings of personal accomplishment.⁴ In another study of US physicians found 46% of the health professionals had at least one symptom of the burnout.⁵ In developing country like India the situation observed to be more over similar like western countries.^{6,7}

On the other hand; some discontent, influential and enemic patients treat the doctors as their personal assets and behave accordingly in both Government and private health care sectors. They compare the sophisticated, simple personal lifestyle of doctors by easily ignoring their hardship, the pain, missed meals and mental as well as physical stress, the pressure they had in past and having in the present.

To reinstate the patient to their health or saving one's life is a noble profession and doctors are determined for it. Keeping some exceptions aside in medical professionals, doctors are dedicated to serve health to all whoever comes to them with ailment at the cost of their own life. The patients need to understand the basic fact that the doctor is also a human being and who also has his/her personal life apart from their profession. Patients must understand and inculcate the reality that, doctors are for their better health rather than being for their money. Doctor-patient relationship was considered as one of the trustworthy relationships in the past, but in the present, it becomes more of service provider-consumer type relationship.

Continuous stress and burnout may lead to decreased standard of care rendered to the patients, increase chances of medical errors like wrong diagnosis or wrong operatory procedure on patient or even leading to loss of life of the patient. Thus, for the welfare of the society; this scenario needs to be changed and it will happen only when the patients believe their doctors without any doubt and follow them without the mistrust in their mind. A doctor deserves a humanistic approach, respect and trust from their patients. When these facts were practised by the patients and their relatives, the overall stress on doctors will surely get decreased and health issues, quality and life of the doctor will be increased definitely.

II. Conclusion

Stress in medical professionals is a known global fact and the doctors must be made stress-free by creating optimistic working environment, making positive policy decisions by Government and gaining the valuable co-operation by the patients and their relatives. At the same time the medical professionals must refresh themselves by outings, music, positive behavioural therapy etc. Similarly, for the better social welfare of the society and the nation, the health of the doctor should be considered equally important as the patient in the need of health.

References

- [1]. Kumar S. Burnout and doctors: Prevalence, prevention and intervention. *Healthcare (Basel)*.2016;4(3):37.
- [2]. El-bar N., Levy A., Wald H.S., Biderman A. Compassion fatigue, burnout and compassion satisfaction among family physicians in the Negev area—a cross-sectional study. *Isr. J. Health Policy Res.* 2013;2(31):1-8.
- [3]. Amofo E., Hanbali N., Patel A., Singh P. What are the significant factors associated with burnout in doctors? *Occup. Med.* 2015;65(2):117–121.
- [4]. Thommasen H., Lavanchy M., Connelly I., Berkowitz J., Grzybowski S. Mental health, job satisfaction, and intention to relocate. Opinions of physicians in rural British Columbia. *Can. Fam. Physician*.2001;47:737–44.
- [5]. Shanafelt T.D., Hasan O., Dyrbye L.N., Sinsky C., Satele D., Sloan J., West C.P. Changes in Burnout and Satisfaction With Work-Life Balance in Physicians and the General US Working Population Between 2011 and 2014. *Mayo Clin. Proc.* 2015;90:1600–13.
- [6]. Saini N K, Agrawal S, Bhasin S K, Bhatia M S, Sharma A K. Prevalence of stress among resident doctors working in Medical Colleges of Delhi.2010;54(4):219-23.
- [7]. Vikas Bajpai. The challenges confronting public hospitals in India, their origins, and possible solutions. *Advances in public health*.2014, Article ID 898502, 27 pages.

Manoj M. Ramugade. "The Grass Is Always Greener on the Other Side – The Undisclosed Side of Doctors." *IOSR Journal of Dental and Medical Sciences (IOSR-JDMS)*, vol. 18, no. 1, 2019, pp 12-13.