IMA launches ALERT campaign

New Delhi, April 14, 2017: As per a recent survey conducted by IMA among a sample size of 1325 people, it was found that 71.2% of the patients wanted the doctor to greet them and introduce himself/herself in the very first meeting. About 90.2% of the patients want the doctor to listen to them in great detail during the first consultation; 84.4% want the doctor to explain everything about the illness, investigation, and drugs; 75.3% of the doctors want to understand what the patient has grasped; and 38.8% of the patients want the doctor to thank them after the consultation.

As an outcome of these insights gathered, the IMA has launched the ALERT campaign where:

A - to acknowledge the patient and introduce oneself
L - to listen to the patient
E – to explain everything about the illness and investigation
R – To re-listen to patient to gather what he has understood
T – (doctor) thanking the patient after the consultation is over

Speaking about the launch of this campaign, Padma Shri Awardee Dr K K Aggarwal, National President Indian Medical Association (IMA) and President Heart Care Foundation of India (HCFI) and Dr RN Tandon – Honorary Secretary General IMA in a joint statement, said, "Healthcare delivery has become more personalized today. Unlike olden days, where the patient was convinced by the diagnosis done and treatment given out, the patients of today want to understand what is bothering their health and take a participatory approach to getting well and healing. This way they feel more involved in their treatment plan. Keeping this in mind, the IMA has launched the ALERT campaign, which aims to address these patient concerns in a systematic manner. We are sure that with the help of ALERT, both the doctors and the patients will be in a better position to understand and trust each other."

A physician working in a patient care setting may have many things on their mind. However, the most important of these is their patients’ health and the patient is thus the real boss who has to be kept happy and in good humor. Dr Aggarwal further says, "A physician-patient alliance is of utmost importance during any treatment. Working together helps improve the patient’s quality of life and health. Patients look up to the doctor to get their problems resolved. And when they are aware of who is doing what, and what condition they are suffering from, it takes the guesswork out and makes the entire process less confusing. The ALERT campaign is a step in that direction."
As part of this campaign, several approaches can be used to facilitate open communication.

- Sit down
- Attend to patient comfort
- Establish eye contact
- Listen without interrupting
- Show attention with nonverbal cues, such as nodding
- Allow silences while patients search for words
- Acknowledge and legitimize feelings
- Explain and reassure during examinations
- Ask explicitly if there are other areas of concern

-ENDS-

About IMA: Indian Medical Association is the only representative, national voluntary organization of Doctors of Modern Scientific System of Medicine, which looks after the interest of doctors as well as the well being of the community at large. It has its Headquarter in Delhi and State / Terr. Branches in 30 States and Union Territories. It has over 2,60,000 doctors as its members through more than 1765 active local branches spread across the country.

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