Majority of doctors fear violence and are stressed out, reveals IMA study

The all-India survey highlights the unsatisfactory nature of the job and the urgent need to create awareness

New Delhi, 01 July 2017: A landmark all-India survey released by the Indian Medical Association (IMA) on the occasion of Doctors Day has found that about 82.7% of doctors in India feel stressed out in their profession. While fear of violence is the main stressor in many doctors (46.3%) followed by fear of being sued (24.2%) and fear of criminal prosecution (13.7%). The findings come in the light of the many atrocities faced by the medical fraternity today, the most disturbing of which include violence against doctors and their criminal prosecution. The anxiety of doctors over the issues plaguing the profession is evident by the fact that about 56% of them do not get a comfortable 7-hour sleep most days of the week.

Conducted online over a period of 15 days, the survey received responses from 1681 doctors including general practitioners, physicians, surgeons, gynecologists and super specialists working in private OPDs, nursing homes, corporate hospitals or government hospitals. It is an eye-opener on the extent to which doctors have been affected. About 62.8% of the doctors surveyed are unable to see their patients without any fear of violence and 57.7% have thought of hiring security in their premises.

Speaking about the survey, 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, "The medical profession is undergoing some of the toughest times today with its nobility and integrity at stake. Today medicine is just another profession, and doctors have become like everybody else: insecure, discontented and anxious about the future. This survey was aimed at analysing how happy and satisfied doctors are with their profession. The results prove the fact that doctors are not very happy with what they are doing and a large part of it is due to lack of patient trust in them. The emotional, mental, and physical attacks on doctors are at an all-time high. More than half of the doctors surveyed indicate that they suffer from increasing anxiety. A sizeable chunk does not want their children or grandchildren to take up this profession. Most doctors are of the opinion that while they chose medicine because it was worthwhile and noble, the profession has been reduced to nothing but a charade today."
It is pertinent to note that a large number of doctors suffer from blood pressure and diabetes. Another notable factor is that about 76.3% also get anxiety quite often. As per a nationwide study conducted by IMA earlier, doctors face maximum violence while providing emergency services, with as many as 48.8% of such incidents reported from intensive care units (ICUs) or after a patient undergoes surgery. The main reason reported behind such violence is unnecessary investigations or delay in attending to a patient.

Adding further, Dr Aggarwal, said, "On this Doctor's Day, it is important to make people aware that this growing discontent and anxiety among doctors can have serious consequences for patients. Unhappy doctors will make for unhappy patients. The fear of lawsuits; runaway malpractice liability premiums; and last but not the least, loss of professional autonomy has led to many physicians looking at themselves as mere pawns. This survey is a definite proof of that."

The 'Doctor–Patient' relationship is a sacred one and this survey points to the fact that the dignity of the profession should be maintained. Doctors are also human beings and not healing angels. Victimizing the medical practitioner if the patient does not respond to treatment is unacceptable as are other atrocities against doctors.

Another study conducted by the Indian Medical Association (IMA) highlighted the significance of soft skills for doctors. The survey showed that patients expect their doctors to be courteous; almost 90% of patients wanted their doctors to introduce themselves to patients, acknowledge the patient, give every patient a patient listening, impart complete information about the diagnosis, investigations, and treatment and revise and review what the patient has understood. About 40% of the patients said that the doctor should also thank them for giving an opportunity to treat. So, stay ALERT: Acknowledge and Ask, Listen, Explain, Revise and Review, and say Thank you to the patient.

-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.

For further information please contact:
Sanjeev Khanna - 9871079105
Md Adib Ahmad – 9873716235
hsgima@gmail.com
IMA Public & Media Advocacy Cell
How happy and satisfied we are
1,681 responses

Are we happy with the profession
1,681 responses

- Yes: 38.5%
- No: 24.7%
- To some extent: 36.8%

Do we get a comfortable 7 hours sleep
1,672 responses

- Most days of the week: 56%
- No: 44%

Do I feel stressed out
1,655 responses

- Never: 82.7%
- Frequently: 17.3%
Do I have high blood pressure

1,660 responses

- Yes: 64.3%
- No: 34.2%
- Insomnia
- Not yet
- Hypothyroid, RA
- Anxiety
- High cholesterol
- Depression

Do I have diabetes

1,674 responses

- Yes: 81.5%
- No: 18.5%

Am I relaxed while seeing patients without any fear of violence

1,670 responses

- Yes: 62.8%
- No: 37.4%
have I thought of hiring a security in my clinic premises
1,658 responses

Would you like your children or grandchildren to become doctors
1,676 responses

My main stressors
1,642 responses
Do I get anxiety more often
1,654 responses

- Yes: 76.3%
- Never: 23.7%

Do I take social drinks to relax
1,674 responses

- Yes: 73.2%
- No: 26.8%