Press Release

A Doctors Day Initiative

Patients who trust their doctors more likely to follow treatment
- Important to restore confidence and trust for the profession in patients
- Stringent action must be taken against quacks who are damaging the nobility of the profession

New Delhi, 27 June 2017: According to a study conducted recently this year, patients with high blood pressure who had more trust in the medical profession were more likely to take their medication than those with less trust. People with higher levels of trust took their blood pressure medicine 93% of the time versus 82% of the time for those who had lower levels of trust. Additionally, having trust in the medical profession has been linked to greater resilience (ability to adapt to difficult life circumstances) and better health-related quality of life.

In medical practice, the very foundation of the relationship between a doctor and his patient is trust. It is a fiduciary (derivative of the Latin word for 'confidence' or 'trust') relationship. Both sides need to have mutual trust for positive treatment outcomes. However, in the present scenario, this trust is waning away and the doctor–patient relationship is no longer held sacrosanct as before.

Speaking on this issue, 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 "A recent survey conducted by the IMA showed that patients expect their doctors to be courteous; almost 90% of patients want 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. Patients who do not trust their doctors will not confide in them nor will they be motivated to adhere to the prescribed treatment plan. Modern medicine is patient-centric and based on partnership, where the patient is an equal partner in the diagnostic and therapeutic process. Patients rely on doctors to take care of their health, so trusting the doctor assumes paramount importance. It is essential that doctors are courteous with their patients and explain the management plan in a language that they are able to understand. This is the concept of informed consent."

Lack of communication is a major cause of disputes between doctors and patients today. This can be tackled by the triad of ‘Plan, Communication, and Documentation’, where ‘Plan’ means observations and treatment decided by the doctor. If the same is ‘Communicated’ to the patient, ‘Documented’, and then implemented, there can never be a dispute. Any disparity between a plan and the outcome leads to a dispute.
Defining the ABC of a doctor, Dr Aggarwal further added, "Three components of a good doctor are: Available, Behavior, and Competency. It is important to remember that an available and a well-behaved doctor is much more important than a doctor who is competent. With medical diseases becoming more complex and lifespan increasing, there has never been a more appropriate time for patients to trust their doctors fully. Doctors must remember their oath and make their patients the center of their work. Additionally, the medical community must also take a stand against quacks in order to restore the nobility and integrity of this profession."

**To build a successful doctor-patient relationship:**

- Do what you say: For example, if you have told your patient that you would be late by one hour, make sure that it is only one hour and not later than that
- Document what you speak
- Preserve what you document

**-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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