Press Release

Burnout among doctors a serious concern

Study shows about 66% doctors suffer from depersonalization or lack of empathy

New Delhi, 04 May 2017: A well-researched topic in the West, burnout among doctors is not studied much in India. In a research study conducted by two doctors, using two international statistical scales to assess burnout, published in the medical journal *Cureus*, about 45% of the respondents received a high score on emotional exhaustion and another 66% suffered from depersonalization or lack of empathy for patients. Some responses given by about 500 doctors who responded to a 25-point questionnaire relate to lack of enough opportunities at work, overlooking their own needs to fulfill work demands, or neglecting self-improvement due to work pressure.

Burnout among doctors is an important social issue that directly affects patients and healthcare. Modern medicine has changed and this has created new challenges for medical professionals. As the demands of this profession increase, so does frustration.

Speaking about this, 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 "Burnout is a serious issue and is possibly higher among doctors than other professionals. However, it is a cause for concern because doctors suffering from burnout tend to lack empathy towards their patients or have impaired judgement. Burnout can increase with specialty and practice. With the number of specialists in India being limited, doctors tend to work for longer hours and hence, frustration mounts."

Burnout or compassion fatigue is not an overnight phenomenon. Some factors that lead to compassion fatigue are demands of the job, the sense of responsibility towards lives, and continued exposure to pain and suffering in an adverse healthcare environment. One of the reasons for a downward spiral is that physicians are not trained to examine their feelings and therefore may feel guilty of having emotions.

Adding further, Dr Aggarwal, said, "It is important for professionals in the field of medicine to lead a balanced life and take out time for self-reflection, identify priority areas, and adopt a healthier lifestyle. However, all this is not taught in the curriculum and neither can it wait till this condition..."
engulfs you. Whether it is about preventing compassion fatigue or finding your way back from this condition, identifying what's important to you is a good start."

Although burnout is not easy to reverse all at once, medical professionals can take some steps to regain a sense of purpose and balance.

- Manage work hours and maintain a balance
- Relax and rejuvenate by engaging in activities that you enjoy
- Eat healthy and exercise
- Spend time with family and friends and nurture relationships
- Remember that it is important to value others
- Practice relaxation techniques like yoga, tai chi, and meditation

-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
mediaimahq@gmail.com
IMA Public & Media Advocacy Cell