Press Release

‘Koi dekh to nahi raha?’: doctors must not engage with patients in social circles

Being the brand ambassadors of good health and habits, it professional doctors should avoid engaging with their patients in social settings

New Delhi, Jan 11, 2017: Medicine is considered to be a noble profession. Doctors preach good habits to their patients on a daily basis. So, the public perception at large is that doctors and other medical professionals practice what they preach, i.e. they do not smoke or drink. However, this ideal picture is far from reality.

Doctors are also humans, and like all other demanding professions, a doctor’s round-the-clock busy schedule deserves some social or personal time. At leisure, doctors may choose to indulge in some habits like the occasional glass of alcohol. While doing so in moderation is perfectly acceptable, but such engagement in a social setting in presence of patients may seem highly hypocritical.

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 public perception is that doctors are brand ambassadors of health. Our profession and its success depends on this perception and requires us to maintain our dignity and integrity in front of our patients. However, this does not mean we do not deserve to indulge in social behaviour. It is advised that doctors who engage in social drinking must avoid such engagement with past, present and prospective patients.”.

“As a doctor or a healthcare professional, you should always ask yourself “Koi dekh to nahi raha?” to remind yourself and ascertain that you are not drinking in presence of your patient in a social setting. This is one of the moral codes of ethics that comes with being a doctor and it should be respected. This will ultimately be for the patient’s benefit in the long run” added Dr. Aggarwal.

Patient-doctor relationship is built on mutual trust and understanding. When patients see their healthcare provider indulging in such “questionable” behavior, it creates doubts in this relationship.

Doctors also should not have their patients on their social media friends list.

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**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 29 States and Union Territories. It has over 2, 53,000 doctors as its members through more than 1650 active local branches spread across the country.

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