

Editorial Article

Dealing with a Patient: The Risks and Cautions

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A physician is one who gets exposure to a good number of persons of different ages, sex, religion, caste, habit and temper. If observed no two persons can be considered to be similar in their physical and mental characters. This is the difficulty of not only the physicians but also of all the medical and paramedical persons in maintaining status and position. Even in the normal state, a stranger may show unusual, unexpected behaviour. A common man, during daily life, comes to contact with another either known previously or visited with goodwill. Hence the fear of untoward happening is negligible.

A patient can be considered as one who has lost patience. There is a physical imbalance (ease) leading to anxiety, depression, feeling of unprotectedness, uncertainty, irritability, etc. When they visit a physician there is a great expectation of good behaviour, care and cure. Therefore, a physician/health worker should always be cautious enough when they deal with a patient. Carelessness may invite defamation, allegation and a lot of troubles.

Many allegations of misbehaviour, mishandling, etc. are the common experience of the physicians. Experiencing all the unwanted facts the scholars and teachers of medical science advise some guidelines to the physicians as “codes and conducts” to the physicians to follow at the time of dealing with the patient.

At the time of visiting a patient, the physician should always keep some facts in mind like –

- (1) The patient is not in a sound physical state as a result the mind is also disturbed.
- (2) As there are suffering and imbalance at any moment the person may get irritated and even may become aggressive.
- (3) The expectation of the patient from the physician is affection, care and cure.



Considering the facts mentioned the physician should follow some codes and cautions when dealing with the patient –

(1) During the process of history taking the questions should be asked tactfully using easy language and a soft voice with love. For example – instead of asking the patient “Are you married?” should be asked, “Who are there in your family?” Because the person may not get married even up to an advanced age which can make him unhappy, as a result, the question regarding marriage may hurt him and make him sentimental.

(2) Sometimes the patient may not be able to give the expected and right answer to the questions asked by the physician. In such a situation, instead of being angry, the question should be repeated and even the language should be changed and some clues to be given to help the patient to get the proper answer. For example – the patient is asked “What is the duration of your sufferings?” The patient is not being able to give the proper answer. Then some clues like indicating some important memorable festivals, days, etc. should be given to him and should be asked to try to say the relationship with such demarcations in days.

(3) When talked a feeling of friendliness should be tried to establish with the patient. For any mistake made by the patient should not be angry. Rather with a softness he/she should be tried to bring to the appropriate tract. To make it understandable to the physicians (**VAIDYA**) the Ayurvedic classics advise treating a patient as son /daughter. It is also advised that the physician should always try to understand the mind (**internal feelings**) of the patient to be a success in practice. The physician is advised to read the internal of the patient (**ANTARATMA**).

(4) When the patient has examined a short but clear idea about the part going to be examined should be notified which will help to get proper co-operation. Even sometimes it is seen that on touching the abdomen the patient objects or jumps from the examination table preventing the proper examination. No irrelevant part should be exposed or touched. If the need for examination of the private part is felt consent should be taken.

(5) Especially in the case of dealing with the female patient the physician should take maximum precaution as they are more sensitive and cautious about their privacy. Modern medicine prohibits the examination of a female patient without keeping a female attendant, especially if the physician is male. More caution is necessary for talking and examining a female patient. At every step of examination of a female patient, even in general practice, verbal informed consent is mandatory.



Considering the natural sentiments of the females, the Ayurvedic scholars, before thousands of years, advised the physicians to follow some rules about behaviour with them like,

- (1) never talk with a female in absence of others,
- (2) never seat with a female on one seat,
- (3) take anything except food and water from a female.

AS SUMMARY IT CAN BE SAID THAT A PHYSICIAN HAS MORE RISK AND RESPONSIBILITY IN DEALING WITH THE PATIENTS. AT EVERY STEP THERE IS NEED OF CAUTION, TOLERANCE, AND APPLICATION OF INTELLIGENCE.

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