

Humanism in professionals.....do we need to teach?

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We all belong to same family, we are professionals, bound to save one's life with Hippocrates oath. The time has changed, the competition and goals made doctors to change but does it mean that our attitude towards the patients have changed? Minds revolves, rewinds and switch to search button to get the answer..... nowadays why patients hardly feel doctors as lifesavers or messengers of GOD? Are we as 'professionals' lacking 'humanism' in our practice?

Humanism in health care is characterized by a respectful and compassionate relationship between doctors, as well as all other members of the healthcare team and their patients. It reflects attitudes and behaviors that are sensitive to the values and the cultural and ethnic backgrounds of others. The humanistic healthcare professional demonstrates the following attributes ("I.E., C.A.R.E.S."):

- **Integrity:** the congruence between expressed values and behavior
- **Excellence:** clinical expertise
- **Compassion:** the awareness and acknowledgement of the suffering of another and the desire to relieve it
- **Altruism:** the capacity to put the needs and interests of another before your own
- **Respect:** the regard for the autonomy and values of another person
- **Empathy:** the ability to put oneself in another's situation, e.g., physician as patient
- **Service:** the sharing of one's talent, time and resources with those in need; giving beyond what is required.

'Professionalism' and 'Humanism' describe distinctly different yet intimately linked attributes of the good medical practice. Professionalism denotes a way of behavior in accordance of set norms, while humanism denotes set of intrinsic values and convictions about one's obligations and caring towards others. When it was noticed that physician trainees were scientifically proficient and technically well-trained, but with a sad lack of caring and compassion, few training program were also initiated towards orientation and application of same by many medical schools. In a systematic review by Birken et al (2003) on "Teaching Professionalism in medical education"- best evidence in medical Education (BEME) few points commented are;

- Currently there is no uniform model to integrate the teaching of professionalism in the medical curriculum
- There was no consensus on best the method to teach professionalism in medicine from this review
- Role modeling and personal reflections, ideally guided by faculty, are the important elements in current teaching programs.
- The environment of the institution does have a critical role in the development, implementation and evaluation of a successful professionalism curriculum.
- Workplace learning with long term clinical experience may work. Early patient contacts have shown better results.
- Using constructed case scenarios and asking for students reflections. Teaching professionalism didactically may not have best results.

The era definitely needs to train the generation for effect of contribution of humanism and empathy in treating patients. In context of this, it can be said that, we may be inculcating professionalism actively to our students but the element of humanism is left to be explored by the hidden curriculum. Continuing to foster professionalism is critical to rebuild the traditional values of medicine whereas drawing on the humanities will not only be healing for the patient, but it will also enrich the physician's own sense of satisfaction with practice.

Professionalism was "caught rather than taught", but now scenario has changed, professionalism is considered as the need of hour and is considered as core competency to be taught to medical graduate. It is simply explained by *Melinkoff*:

"The goal of Medical Education is to produce the physician we would like to see if we are sick."

.....So are we ready to learn and teach humanism??