

Blessing of Knowledge-Based Empathy to Engender Prudent Prescriber

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“It is the patient who carries the burden of illness, but the compassionate physician shares that burden, lifting it when possible and lightening it when that is all that can be done. This sharing of the burden has always been the hallmark of the medical profession.”^[1]

The American University of Antigua, College of Medicine’s Admissions Committee and a few others feels that compassion, strong work ethic, professionalism, knowledge, confidence, humility, passion, empathy, being humane, respectfulness and thoroughness are indispensable prerequisites for a good physician to master.^[2,3] Physicians require to own comprehensive and up to date medical knowledge that can be revoked at the drop of a hat.² Updating medical doctors’ knowledge regularly is an essential necessity, as medical science is changing and progressing, especially the field of pharmacological intervention.^[2,4-6] Hereafter, could argue against their acquired knowledge through undergraduate studies.^[2] Henceforward, acquisitions and updating knowledge is a fundamental prerequisite to a good physician.^[7-9]

Several bystanders had contended that medical practice is increasingly dominated by dehumanized qualities, corporate necessities, machines and computer-operated diagnostic tools.^[10-14] The answer remains in developing empathy among medical doctors.^[15] Empathy has been considered as good equipment for medical doctors all over the globe to improve patient care, acquiescence and satisfaction.^[16-19] Empathy can be defined as the capacity to take the standpoints of others, to be penetrating to their intimate understanding and to participate with them compassionately, rather than merely sharing their emotions.^[14] Empathy in the medical setting defined as *“appreciation of the patient’s emotions and expression of that awareness to the patient.”^[20]* Henceforward, empathy has been extended *“to include emotive, moral, cognitive and behavioral dimensions.”^[21]* Consequently, empathy has been considered as an indispensable tool to develop good therapeutic rapport.^[15] The American Association of Medical Colleges has considered empathy as an essential learning-objective and described for medical professionalism so that medical schools will incorporate in their curriculum and promote to teach empathy.^[21-23] Globally empathy has been considered as an essential and minimum learning-objective for medical professionalism.^[23,24]

Prescribing medicine is one of the most valuable and standard components, but possibly one of the most dangerous activities that most physicians’ practices every day.^[25,26] Medicines can be lengthening-life and increases the quality of life but can also diminish the quality of life or even result in hospital admission from adverse drug reactions and prescribing errors.^[27-29] *“Prudent prescribing brings the principles of prudent healthcare: minimizing avoidable harm, delivering the minimum appropriate intervention and promoting equity together with rational prescribing practice – prescribing that is safe, efficient and effective.”^[30]* Poor prescribing occurs in three ways: Over-prescribing, Under-prescribing and Mis-prescribing.^[30] The rational prescribing is the nuts and bolts of prudent prescribing. It is clarified that rational prescribing ensures safe, effective and cost-effective and customize the treatment to an individual need of the patient. Therefore, it safeguards expected benefits that offset any probable

adverse drug reactions.^[31] The General Medical Council has identified certain standards need to be achieved to do medical practice and medical schools are accountable for confirming their medical students to possess the expertise to prescribe.^[32,33] The Royal College of Physicians (RCP) reconceptualize medical professionalism for the current society. Thereafter, RCP defines medical professionalism is *“a set of values, behaviors and relationships that underpins the trust the public has in doctors.”* Probably the solution remains in training and educating physicians and future medical doctors the necessity of prudent prescribing and healthcare with especial weight in acquiring knowledge and empathy.^[34-37]

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author does not possess any conflict of interest.

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