

PHYSICIAN ON PRACTICE

A PERSONAL JOURNEY IN PATIENT CARE

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To get the opportunity to wear the white coat with dignity and pride is an honor and privilege to get to serve the public as a physician. This separates this profession from others. A physician has qualities like well behaved, sincere, devoted, knowledgeable, skillful, honest, sympathy and empathy towards his patients. This is not easy. To become a good physician, he has to pass a long life with lots of sacrifices

In the realm of medicine, the essence of being a great physician extends beyond the clinical expertise to encompass a profound understanding of the patient as a whole. This realization became profoundly apparent to me during a winter morning round at Dhaka Medical College, an experience that left an indelible mark on my journey as a physician.

As I embarked on my rounds, accompanied by a freshly placed intern, the scene that unfolded before me was emblematic of the harsh realities faced by patients in resource-strapped environments. The hospital floor was flooded with a sea of patients, each vying for attention and care. Among them, I noticed a wife sitting stoically next to her unconscious husband, engaged in a silent battle with the biting winter cold.

Upon closer examination, it became evident that the patient's condition was dire, marked by the ominous signs of hepatic encephalopathy. What struck me further was the grim backdrop of their financial struggles – having already spent a significant portion of the meager 10,000 taka they possessed, a sum derived from renting their only property. The weight of their poverty hung heavy in the air, accentuating the urgency of the situation.

In this critical moment, I found myself at a crossroads, faced with the responsibility of making decisions that could profoundly impact the lives of both the patient

and their family. I made a conscious choice to advocate for judicious resource allocation, advising my team against unnecessary investigations that could deplete the remaining funds. The following morning, I returned with the intention of offering some financial relief from our medical team to the grieving wife. However, fate had dealt a harsh hand, and the patient had succumbed to their ailment the previous night. The opportunity to provide immediate assistance had vanished, leaving behind a profound sense of responsibility and reflection.

This poignant experience underscores a fundamental truth in the practice of medicine – a great physician is one who transcends the boundaries of clinical diagnosis and treatment. It is an understanding that extends beyond the laboratory results to encompass the broader context of the patient's life. In the intricate tapestry of healing, financial, social, and emotional threads are woven together, each requiring the physician's attention and consideration.

As physicians, we are entrusted not only with the task of diagnosing and treating ailments but also with the responsibility of advocating for our patients' overall well-being. The importance of a holistic approach becomes apparent in situations where financial constraints dictate the course of medical care. In such instances, our decisions can profoundly impact not only the patient's health but also the trajectory of their family's future.

Sir William Osler said “ The good physician treats the disease; the Great Physician Treats the Patient who has the disease”. It is a testament to the transformative power of empathy, reminding us that the art of healing extends far beyond the prescription pad and stethoscope. In the heart of the physician-patient relationship lies the potential to create profound impact, fostering not only physical recovery but also contributing to the preservation of dignity and hope in the face of adversity.