

On being a doctor

Why should we pay a doctor who is from our own locality

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Now-a-days, large number of doctors enters in to the steps of post graduation immediately after completing of MBBS. Those who do not may at best work at Upozilla level hospitals through government services or NGOs and life in the Upozillas have more or less changed by having at least some of the facilities of city/urban life. So, very few doctors of this generation have the experience of working or practicing in absolute rural environment. I would like to share with the readers some of my memories of more than two decades back as a rural doctor.

After completing my internship from Rangpur Medical college in 1991, I had started working, as part time job, in different private hospitals. But I had cherished in my mind, since I was a medical student, the intention of general practice in rural areas specially in my own village where I was born. It is a remote village, Shihali, 10km west from Shibgonj Upazilla of Bogra District. I contacted some people of my village and shared my intention with them. They happily agreed and arranged everything. I gave up the job of the private hospital and one fine morning started for Shihali.

It was going well and I was feeling good serving the people as a GP. The fees was Tk 20 at the first visit and Tk 10 in the subsequent visits. But I did not get it most of the times. Many of the people were very poor and could not pay.

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Instead, they frequently brought eggs, chicken, fruits, vegetables or even a bottle of cows milk from their own household/farm. I was born in that village and many kith and kin were there whom I had to prescribe for free. Some people used to say "I am the elder son of the brother in law of your fathers first cousin" or like these to avoid the fees. Others simply said "why should we pay a doctor who is from our own locality?" I tried to entertain each of them with smiling face.

One day a farmer came to me for the treatment of his wife, a 40-45 yrs lady, who was suffering from abdominal pain and vomiting. The severely ill and prostrated lady was laid down on the examination table. I took her history and approached to examine her abdomen. To my surprise, she jumped up and got down from the table and cried out "How dare you touch my body being a stranger male?" Her husband was ashamed of his wives behaviour and repeatedly expressed his sorrow. I wrote the prescription quickly for her pain and vomiting and referred her to the Upazilla Hospital. Since then, never in my life, I performed physical examination of any patient, male or female, without informed consent.

General practice is full of variety. You never know which problem is coming up next when you call in a patient. This huge variety also challenges your knowledge and you cannot say "I do not know what it is." Students, interns and doctors encounter the patients in the hospital wards in a secure environment where the helpless patient is far away from his house or locality. But in GP, you have the amazing privilege of seeing the patients as real people – a very different experience from seeing the patients on a ward round.

Medical Jokes

Lab Test

Two guys were sitting outside a medical clinic. One of them was crying, tears were pouring down his face. The other guy asked, "Why are you crying?" The first one replied, "I came here for blood test." The second one asked, "So? Why are you crying? Are you afraid?" The first guy replied, "No, not that. During the blood test they cut my finger."

Hearing this, the second one started crying. The first one was astonished and asked the other, "Why are you crying?" Then the second guy replied, "I have come for a urine test."

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