

Doctor-patient relationship: Great expectations

Dear Editor,

From time immemorial, the relationship between doctor and patient has remained sacred. Doctors are revered and treated like gods particularly in Indian society [1]. This relationship has undergone a sea change like many other things in the so-called modern society. Doctors no longer enjoy the undisputable god-like status, as there are increases in number of litigations regarding medical practice. Furthermore, with easy availability of information, educated patients take an active interest in their ailments and do extensive research most of the time before taking a professional opinion. As far as doctors are concerned, on their part, it is often not easy to explain the diagnosis and prognosis of potentially incurable diseases to many patients or their family members. Telling the truth bluntly and telling it gently does make a difference [2]. After the initial reaction, which may vary from acute distress to denial to unnerving calmness, most of the patients tend or have to face the situation [3]. In the article "blurring of boundaries in the doctor-patient relationship," the authors are of the opinion that professional boundaries between doctor and patient are getting blurred [4]. Not being able to maintain a professional barrier is suggested as probably one of the causes of the surge of burnt out young oncologists. That may well be the cause, which many young professionals face today. Therefore, the need for an evidenced-based training regarding doctor-patient relationship is more acutely felt to tackle such problems. Whenever the patients and their relatives can face the situation, it is better to explain the diagnosis and prognosis to them personally in a reasonable manner. Even the advanced information technology can help in preparing answers to frequently asked questions. After all, the doctors and patients all are humans. At times, the doctors themselves are patients, and that is the time when they do get a glimpse of their own profession from a patients' point of view. At the end of the day, all we need is being human and to show care and sympathy for our fellow human beings.

References

1. Jena A, Patnayak R, Chowhan AK. Doctor as a healer. *J Clin Sci Res* 2013;2(4):119.
2. Jena A, Patnayak R, Sampath VV. Tell the truth, but be gentle. *South Asian J Cancer* 2013;2(4):192.
3. Patnayak R, Jena A, Vamsi NR, Bhargavi D. Who will bell the cat? *Indian J Med Paediatr Oncol* 2014;35(1):122.
4. Fallowfield L, Guarneri V, Ozturk MA, May S, Jenkins V. Blurring of boundaries in the doctor-patient relationship. *Lancet Oncol* 2014;15(13):1423-4.

Author's Contributions

RP and AJ prepared the manuscript.

Competing Interest

Nil.

Funding

Sources of funding: None.

**Amitabh Jena¹, Rashmi Patnayak²,
Gajjala V Sivanath Reddy¹**

¹Department of Surgical Oncology, ²Department of Pathology, Sri Venkateswara Institute of Medical Sciences, Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh, India
E-mail: dramitabh2004@yahoo.co.in

Please cite this paper as: Jena A, Patnayak R, Sivanath Reddy GV. Doctor-patient relationship: Great expectations. *Int J Stud Res* 2015;5(1):17.

Received: 31 Mar 2015, Accepted: 01 Jun 2015

Access this article online	
Quick Response Code: 	Website: www.ijsonline.com
	DOI: 10.4103/2230-7095.180090

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.