

Guest Editorial

Gone are the days when doctors were worshipped for their noble deeds. Pick any newspaper, you will find more news on violence against doctors than miracles in medical field. Today while the world is struggling with nuclear terrorism, we, the doctors are continuously victimized with medical terrorism. What's medical terrorism? It's any form of verbal abuses, violent act or threats for violent act; by patients or their attendants against health care personnel.

First we need to find out the root cause of this violence. It mainly stems from young aggressive males, drugs and alcohol intoxication, communication gap between doctor and the patient, increased cost of health care, unrealistic expectations of patients, overworked but underpaid health care staff, lack of faith in judiciary, insufficient security in hospitals, no strong laws against people who engage in such violent acts etc. There are certain ways by which we can decrease the incidence of such attacks. Firstly, there is a very famous saying in medical schools that few extra minutes with patient in the examination room can prevent us from lots of trouble after the treatment. There should not be any cutting in communication time. We should clearly explain the patient about prognosis of disease and cost of the treatment. Develop better communication skills so as not to meet the anger with the anger. Training to learn the warning signals of body language that can precede aggressive act. There should not be any cost hike later on without explaining it to the patient. We should try not to charge for the iatrogenic complications. There should be boards in the waiting area displaying information regarding waiting time, hospital charges list, diseases information in layman language, name and contact of local IMA patient grievance redressal cell and most importantly, laws and rules concerned with the medical terrorism. CCTV cameras should be installed with boards clearly mentioning it. There should be a security guard in front of doctor's room. Take written consent with patient that they will not indulge in any violence and doing so should be compensated by them. Identify the trouble makers in the group and be extra cautious with them. Be knowledgeable in your subject and try not to venture out of your area of expertise.

What to do if the violence happens? Inform the police immediately. Take written statements from people who witnessed the incident. Lodge a FIR. Do a press conference. Get it published in newspaper. Contact your local IMA. Insist your state IMA to contact state government and to frame laws for violence against doctors like Punjab Protection of Medicare Service Persons and Medicare Service Institutions (Prevention of Violence and Damage to Property) Act, 2008 and Tamil Nadu Medicare Service Persons and Medicare Service Institutions (Prevention of Violence and Damage or Loss to Property) Act, 2008

Good luck for the elections to be held at Allahabad in November 2015.

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