



Violence
against
Doctors –
Skills in
Management
May Help –
IIHMR Delhi

Dr Sanjiv Kumar & A. K. Khokhar

Violence against Doctors – Skills in Management May Help – IIHMR Delhi

Dr. Ardis Hoven, Chairman, World Medical Association, in his address at 70th World Health Assembly Geneva recently remarked, “Violence in health care was occurring on a daily basis across China and India, as well as in Europe and America, where patients or relatives were trying to sort out their problems with verbal or physical abuse.” Doctors are often assaulted in India, shot or even stabbed (Madhok P. Violence against doctors. Bombay Hospital Journal 2009:51(2))

The people of India respected health professionals as next to God to relieve human suffering. No more the recent trust deficit in medical services and the general population leading to serious problems like threats, bodily assaults, abuses, beating and thrashing the professionals is shameful for the public at large.

In India, the violent acts are being propagated by the relatives of patients, visitors, intruders and the irresponsible media which fails to know the root cause. “No physician, however conscientious or careful, can tell what day or hour he may be the object of some undeserved attack, malicious accusation, blackmail or suit for damages...”

Looking into the patient’s perspective, it is observed that the patient as well as the family members are disturbed and look for prompt attention and immediate cure. They feel their patient is serious and it is a question of life and death. Patients relatives and friend want personal attention of staff and become violent whenever the patient’s condition deteriorates, in spite of doctors best efforts. They are not familiar with medical conditions and their outcome.

Most of the public perceives professionals, specially in corporate and private hospitals are fleecing them and existing for profit making only. In short there is a lack of trust, no transparency and lack of communication within the system. The matters are worsened as to the media is always looking for such news.

Violence against Doctors – Skills in Management May Help – IIHMR Delhi

The medical staff argues that they work long hours, are attending to other serious patients, there is overcrowding, lack of facilities, resources and administrative support. Doctors treat the patients and cannot guarantee cure. Patients are brought in serious condition, and relatives expect magic.

In the recent past, we have observed the medical staff being assaulted in one or other place. The medical profession has been pressing for security and stringent laws for punishment of such elements and makes media more responsible. State Governments are formulating stringent legislations to overcome this menace and Supreme Court of India has intervened in the matter.

It is observed that patient's lack of understanding of technical matters, unreasonable expectations, high cost of healthcare and lack of proper management of health facilities are the basic issues that required urgent attention. The blaming strategies amongst public, media and medical professionals will not yield any results. The problem will not be solved by legal system. Our country has a very rich heritage of legislation (156 law are applicable to hospitals in India but that is not the remedy to bridge the trust gap between medical professional and the public).

While legal protection is being strengthened, we need to look at the causes of this violence. One of the main causes is the lack of management of health institutions. A lancet article in 2014 on Violence against Doctors listed lack of coordination in admission, delay in attending the patient, demand of advance payment, withholding deceased body pending settling final bill and unethical practices. These are all related to lack of proper management. The doctors are technically competent but not trained as professional managers. Without trained managers the facilities often lack drugs and other supplies, human resource or finances adversely impacting service delivery.

Violence against Doctors – Skills in Management May Help – IIHMR Delhi

There is a need for professional management of the healthcare institutions. The doctors are busy with clinical work and we have shortage of doctors in the country. There is a need to have adequate number of managers to provide administrative and managerial support to clinicians to manage their work better. The managers need good understanding of behavioural issues, soft skills, appropriate management within the available resources, good doctor-patient communication, transparency, quality of care and all related issues. The managers require formal training/education in this regard. It has been observed that there is a significant difference in institution being managed by qualified management professionals and those managed by clinicians alone. The management courses in health, health IT and hospital management courses are now available in many colleges; IIHMR Delhi is one of the top institutions which was adjudged Best Healthcare Management Institute of the Year 2015 by Six Sigma Healthcare.

IIHMR Delhi established in 2008 has made a difference in health management education within a short time. The alumni of this prestigious international institute are spread all over India as well as in other countries. The Institute takes a holistic view of health care and prepares students to take up responsibilities as per present needs to the health industry. Besides academics the institute is also involved in continuing professional training programs and research and consultancies in public health/health management, essential to keep the faculty and staff updated on medical development.

For any further query, you may please contact:

- A.K. Khokhar, Dean(Training), IIHMR-Delhi
- Sanjiv Kumar-Director, IIHMR-Delhi