

Editorial:

Empathy among Medical Students is an Essential Requirement to be a Respectable and Holistic Medical Doctor

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Empathy has been identified as a core component to be a successful medical physician¹ as reported that “empathy has always been and will always be among the physician’s most essential tools of practice.”² The sense and skill of humanity for a medical doctor has been reported long back in 1927 as described “one of the essential qualities of the clinician is interest in humanity, for the secret of the care of the patient is in caring for the patient.”³ One hundred- and ten-years English language do not possess any word like empathy. Thereafter, the introduction of this term, empathy in the English language, is of contemporary origin. English-born psychologist Edward Bradford Titchener translated the German word *Einfühlung* (to protect yourself into what you observe) into English as empathy in 1909 in the English language.^[4-6] Professor Edward Bradford Titchener developed this word, which was rooted in the metaphysical, and intellectual aesthetics thought of *Einfühlung* of Theodor Lipps.^{7,8}

Empathy is an intricate, complex, multi-dimensional perception that has ethical, honest, intellectual, emotional, social, and communicative elements. Medical empathy contains a capability to: (i) “understand the patient’s situation, perspective, and feelings (and their attached meanings); (ii) to communicate that understanding and check its accuracy; and (iii) to act on that understanding with the patient in a helpful (therapeutic) way.”⁹ Consequently, multiple studies revealed that the actual and operative utilization of medical empathy encourages and reassures trustful doctor-patient relationships, significantly associated with ideal

doctor-patient *communiqué*, diagnostic precision, therapeutic obedience, patient gratification, accomplishment, and outstandingly saves time.¹⁹⁻^{15]} It was reported that many communities yet have the desire to find a doctor as an ideal like of the textbook quality. A medical doctor must possess quality of care-giving, empathetic, confident, well-informed, besides patients also expect physicians should be well-dressed, smart, neat and clean.¹⁶ These concepts of professionalism exist from time of Hippokratēs ho Kōos (460-370 BC). Once Hippocrates said that a physician must “be clean in person, well-dressed, and anointed with sweet-smelling unguents.”^[17] Additionally, the first American Medical Association Code of Ethics, in black and white appeared in 1847, highlighted doctors’ proficient obligation to treat every single patient with “attention, steadiness, and humanity.”¹⁸ Medical doctors often reported that they do not show empathetic attitude toward their patients.¹⁹⁻²² Thereafter, medical professional psychological attitudes toward patient care need to be taught and assessed to all healthcare professionals that should involve both medical graduate doctors and undergraduate students.²³⁻²⁶ Another study revealed that empathy supports medical-students to develop affective skills, manners, and attitudes, accomplish capabilities indispensable for patient-centered care, and development of personal and professional growth. Medical educationalists should identify that various affective skills are deep-rooted in empathy. Empathy is soft, flexible, and can empower, catalyze, and simplify to attain affective skills, attitudes,

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and behaviors.²⁶ Various professional bodies for healthcare stressed the need for the development of empathy-based healthcare services.²⁶ The American President, politician, conservationist, naturalist, and writer Theodore Roosevelt (1858-1919) once told that “nobody cares how much you know until they know how much you care.”²⁷ It is much better for humanitarian qualities should develop in early part of life before bad habits conquer a medical doctor. As once immoral conditions attained and practiced, it is relatively problematic to repair. Moreover, once

medical students graduated and obtain license to do practice, it adds more challenging to overhaul their poor psychological professional skills.²⁸⁻³² Thereafter, medical schools should incorporate and emphasize the curriculum including hidden ones to improve empathy and other professional expertise.^{33,34}

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