

On being a Doctor

I started my motorbike and set for the house call at night

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Since my childhood, I have seen many doctors doing GP in villages and towns. I was seen by GPs many a time for different ailments. While a student in medical college, I have always dreamt of doing GP at least for a short period specially in my own village.

After passing MBBS and completing my internship, I went to my own village where my parents lived. I started general practice although I had no experience. I managed a old motorbike as I had to attend house calls often.

It was all going well until one night a young man came to my house and asked to visit his sick mother in his house. It was already 8 pm and in the village where there was no electricity, it was complete dark all around. Moreover I did not know the village and the surrounding areas quite well. So I refused to go. "My mother is having severe respiratory distress" the man said and kept insisting me to go with him. My parents were there and they became worried as I did not know the place well. They talked to the man and made him agree to accompany me to my house after seeing her mother. I started my motorbike and set for the house call with the patient's son.

The patient's house was several kilometers away and it took us more than half an hour in that dark of night over the uneven road of village to reach there. The patient was approximately 55 years lady. She was really in severe respiratory distress with froth coming out of her

mouth. A short history and quick clinical examination revealed that she was a known hypertensive. BP was 210/100 mm(Hg). She had creps all over her both lung fields. It seemed to be a case of acute LVF. I had finished my internship just three months back. Although I had managed acute heart failure before but that was in my own secure arena of medical college hospital and obviously under the supervision of assistant registrar, registrar and teachers with all hospital facilities like oxygen. I could not refer the patient as the nearest hospital was at least 23 kilometers away and there was no ambulance. I decided to stay there and do something on my own.

I used to carry emergency medicine in my bag. I gave her 2 ample lasix i/v and started to follow-up her by pulse, BP and lung auscultation every 10 to 15 minutes. She started micturating within 20 minutes. BP came down to 150/90 mm (Hg) within 2 hours. Respiratory distress improved and she could sleep lying down. I breathed a sigh of relief. I prescribed an antihypertensive, referred her to nearby hospital and left the place for my house at morning leaving behind some happy and grateful faces.

I had met the patient several times thereafter and she was well managed with antihypertensives. I still remember the night very well as I perhaps saved a life as a doctor with experience of only three months. The incident helped me on many occasions in decision making later in my life.

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