

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Patients' Consent in Dental Practices

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Dear Editor,

“Consent” means that the patient accepts, through an unequivocal act of will, to assume certain obligations.¹ Before providing care or treatment to a patient, the dentist must obtain the individual's free and informed consent. This requirement is based on two principles: personal inviolability and free will.

Types of consent include implied consent and expressed consent. Expressed consent is inform either verbal or written. Consent as understood in specific context may differ from its everyday meaning.² Rowe described implied consent as: ‘by being in the chair at the dental surgery with mouths open a patient implies that they are there for dental treatment’ and continued ‘in the past a dentist would undertake treatment as he or she saw fit, which the patient would accept without argument.’³

Contemporary medical ethics and bioethics began after the World War II as a result of contemptible issues in medical research and medical interventions.⁴ The Nuremberg Code of 1948 laid out the principle that “voluntary consent of the human subject is absolutely essential”.⁵

The general perception that dentistry is expensive keeps many people away from the registered professionals on one hand, while on the other hand making them hostage to the services of non-registered lay practitioners. The result is that the people of Bangladesh, in general, have a very low level of awareness regarding oral health and hygiene.⁶ So, they also not concern about the consent paper. In a study which was conducted in Mymensingh Sadar during early 2019, found that only 7.0% maintaining consent paper and 80% dental surgeon sometimes but 13% did not maintain consent paper et all and most of the patients were also unaware about consent paper.⁷

Consent protects the individual's freedom of choice and respects the individual's autonomy. An individual should take decision to participate

without having been subjected to coercion, undue influence or inducement, or intimidation.⁷ It was really alarming and very hard to provide quality oral health care in Bangladesh, without ensuring consent the legal bindings of both parties in dental health care practice.

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