

## View Point

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### The Happy Doctor

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Being a medical doctor can often be very difficult. Not all the dreams that come with this profession are realized. Is it a general rule that doctors are unhappy? Well the answer can be very easy to find. Anyone sitting in a table or room full of doctors will surely hear stories of unhappiness. A recent step has enraged many physicians across Bangladesh. A new machine will be set up in all health facilities to ensure that all doctors are present in duty. This poses a great question to most of the doctors working – can you really measure or monitor a doctor's work merely by setting up such machines? Where will humanity go if it happens? The basic concept of medical practice is rooted in the joy of curing someone. A doctor is trained in various aspects of medical science to provide treatment. Will this sort of step make doctors spend more time thinking about issues like entering and leaving rather than providing service. Nobody knows. Luke Filde's 19th century painting of a contemplative doctor alone with a sick child might now be replaced by a doctor running to put his hands on a machine rather than attending the patients. Under no circumstance, demoralized doctors who are depicted as thieves in front of the general public can be an effective workforce. But unfortunately, our health legislators seem to have forgotten this fact either due to sheer negligence or perhaps due to lack of insight.

Of course, we are speaking of doctors working in the government service as they make the bulk of the working doctors. Many doctors in government service are embarrassed that they have to carry out duties that do not relate to managing patients. Most doctors feel that they are underpaid, overworked and most importantly unsupported. No child wants to be alone without his parents. With every election come showers of new promises by the politicians regarding the health sector. But the matter of the fact is that most of them remain only as promises. In the field it is the physicians who have to face the music having to answer to the people why he can't deliver what was promised. Work seems to have gotten more difficult as media coverage

regarding our work is always negative and doctors find themselves in jail even before they are convicted of any crime. Above all, the professional body representing doctors does not seem to be concerned at all about the real problems other than taking pictures in various events.

A survey in Canada in 2006 revealed that geriatricians were among the top 10 most satisfied specialist groups, and diagnostic radiologists were among the bottom 10. Specialties that many might consider to have better lifestyles (i.e. better work hours and lighter on-call schedules) such as dermatology, physiatry and psychiatry were near the top of the list, whereas specialties with poorer lifestyles, such as family medicine and general surgery, were closer to the bottom. The results showed that the majority of Canada's physicians were satisfied to some degree with their current professional life, with as many as 65.5% of physicians in the lowest ranked specialty (biochemistry) stating that they were at least "somewhat satisfied."<sup>2</sup> An online survey in USA in 2012 revealed that rheumatologists were the happiest doctor whereas internists were the least happy.<sup>3</sup> Fortunately or unfortunately, we do not have any studies to show how happy Bangladeshi doctors are. The reason – perhaps we do not bother to know or perhaps we think doctors cannot be unhappy.

Each and every person has his own dream when entering the medical profession. After years of hard and stressful studies, most do not like the overall scenario when reality sets in. When persistently under scrutiny, not appreciated by the society for the service they provide, doctors find themselves in despair. How can they smile to their patients when they are in pain? Then perhaps the system is not working because we do need some smiling doctors for the poor people in our country.

Doctors are also to be blamed for their own situation. Though we are meritorious, we have let substandard people take control of our destiny, namely politicians, bureaucrats, journalists, and not to forget, the general people. It is time that we tear the so called contract of humanity and become true professionals. People have to remember that doctors are humans; they can make mistakes and should rather concentrate on the positive aspects of our work. The contract

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of goodwill is lost that once together held the government, people and doctors. When patients go to a doctor now, they expect their conditions to be investigated and to gain access to the full resources of scientific medicine. The doctor has changed from an authority into a gatekeeper the patient from a dependant into a consumer.

We started the article with the setup of a machine, but that is not the center of unhappiness. With the negative media coverage, multiple assaults all over Bangladesh where no guilty parties were punished, when doctors were feeling guardian less, this step definitely will trigger a new slump in doctor morale because the need for appreciation has been met by contempt and misunderstanding.

The pursuit of happiness has been a key component of human development. Each and everyone, in the pursuit refine

him or herself in a better way to become happy. In the modern day scenario of Bangladesh, the doctors are in dire need of happiness as we all know unhappy doctors will not be good healers.

**Conflict of Interest :** None

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