Editorial

Medical Professionalism in Pakistan: Taking Inspiration from the Pakistani Motto

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Medical professionalism is considered to be a very important component in medical education and embodies a social contract of a doctor to the community he serves. The social contract, as defined by Cruess, is "a contractual relationship with a series of obligations and expectations based on mutual trust between the society and medicine" . Each society has different moral and social norms and hence it become rather clear that medical professionalism and its attributes will vary from society to society. Much work has been done in the west to define attributes related to medical professionalism. However, Western frameworks of medical professionalism may not be suited to the cultural values of non-Western countries.

It has been brought to attention now that not all the attributes of medical professionalism as defined by West are compatible with the Eastern culture. For example Al-Eraky demonstrated that there is influence of Islamic values and norms in the Arabic society and for that he purposed a 4-gate model of professionalism, which had four themes (domains),that is: dealing with self, dealing with tasks, dealing with others and dealing with God(taqwa and ehtasab) It must be pointed out that not all the Muslim countries demonstrated the domains of faith in Allah and religion as an integral part of professionalism. For an example, thought Turkey is an Islamic State, the attributes lacked the 'faith' discipline in defining professionalism.

Similarly Khan and Tabassum 2010 demonstrated view point of all the stakeholders in their study from Pakistan and the need to conform to the global standards applied within local settings. This study highlighted the inculcation of perspectives of practioners, students as well as the public (patients) in making a workable framework of professionalism in Pakistan. A lot of work is yet to be done to develop a generic code of ethics in professionalism in Pakistan. Taking another Asian country as an example, China defines professionalism in realms of Confucian values like ren ai (humane love) and gong xin (public spiritedness) .Since these perspectives are different then the western definition of professionalism in terms of physician's personal and professional dichotomized behaviours, it is the need of the day that each society develops its own model for professional codes and ethics.

Pakistan, being a Muslim country, follows the principles of Islam in each and every domain of life, medicine being one of it. However since Pakistan has rich history of cross-cultures; it also draws influence from the British colonization as well as the traditional Indian Culture. There is a need to have self-developed norms and standards every part of life, rather than passively following the previous standards which may not represent the Pakistani culture truly.

Serving the same purpose, Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, gave a motto 'unity, faith and discipline' through his personal example and instilled this message to the youth of his time and for future generations.

Unity, Faith, Discipline

These three words are considered to be key in the progression of the country from developing to developed country. In my opinion, this slogan should also form the basis of medical professionalism. If we

combine the idea of unity, faith and discipline with the previous attributes of professionalism as laid by the organizations from all over the world, we can create a model of medical professionalism which will be true to our society. This can then form the cognitive domain for creating a curriculum on professionalism for our undergraduate and postgraduate doctors.

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