

Teaching Professional Values in Medicine

Shabnam Bazmi

MD, Forensic Medicine Specialist

Fellowship in Medical Ethics

Assistant Professor, Medical Ethics Department,

School of Traditional Medicine, Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences

Email: sh_bazmi2003@yahoo.com

On Winter 2016, an article published in Medical Education Journal entitled “Medical Oath: The Educational Impact”. In this article the author emphasized on setting educational goals on inducing professional behaviors according to medical oaths and professional codes and recommended planned programs to reinforce this issue.

Medical professionalism is presented in the form of medical oaths (e.g. Hippocratic Oath) since ancient times. Today, it is obvious that performing medical practice in accordance with national and international codes and medical oaths results in an effective doctor-patient relationship and a successful diagnosis, treatment and prevention of diseases (1). So professionalism and professional values are taught in creditable universities these days. The Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) in the US has emphasized six core competencies in all residency “training and assessment” programs and professionalism constitutes one of the six competencies. Professional competence is the constant and conscious use of communication, knowledge, technical skills, clinical reasoning, emotions and values and is reflected in daily practices through serving the interests of individuals and the society (2).

We conducted a study on 150 medical interns, clinical residents, physicians and professors working in hospitals, the results showed that only 44.7% of participants had heard the term “medical professionalism” and an average of

49.57% of participants responded correctly to the items on the knowledge of professionalism (The related article is in publishing process). The results of this and similar studies shows that despite the importance of the issue, the medical professionals appear to have not a favorable theoretical knowledge about medical professionalism (3); although this unfavorable status does not indicate that their practices are unethical, it should be noted that one of the prerequisites for establishing a proper relationship between the medical community and the patients is possessing a proper knowledge of this essential concept. Improving behaviors and performances in medical professions requires adequate training on the concepts of medical professionalism and consequently the assessment of the levels of professionalism achieved in medical professionals (4).

As a final word, a course on medical professionalism and professional values that its contents are based on medical oaths is recommended to be added to the curriculum of students in all fields of medicine which can be followed by a pre-graduation assessment of the professional performance of the students.

Reference

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