

TRUST AND COMMUNICATION IN A DOCTOR PATIENT RELATIONSHIP

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Due to the changing patterns in the society and also owing to the easy access to medical information and advancements made in the medical field the doctor patient- relationship in Nepal is becoming more and more challenging now days. This relationship between the doctor and patient is becoming more difficult and lot of confrontations and unwarranted incidences are happening when the medical knowledge is becoming a commodity between the doctor and the patient.¹ Sir William Osler, the famous Canadian physician, has stated that “A good physician treat the disease and a great physician treats the patient who has the disease” and of course the physician cannot treat or provide the patient a high quality care without a trustworthy relationship and adequate communication between himself and the patient.²

Trust is one of the essential components and fundamental part of doctor-patient relationship.³ In general, to trust means to believe that someone is honest, nice or good, and will not harm you. Trust in a doctor-patient relationship is something that involves both confidence and reliance. In the medical field for some patients, it can be their belief or expectation for the physician to behave in a certain way. Patients might expect their health care provider to be competent, compassionate, honest, empathic, and interested in their good will. To establish a trustworthy relationship between the doctor and the patient it is utmost necessary for the patient that he has to overcome with many negative attitudes and prejudice feelings and trust the doctors with their private information and body which is essential for their proper management.⁴

Effective and efficient communication is considered as one of the most important ingredients and a ladder to success in every endeavor in medical practices.⁵ In health care settings, trust and communication are labeled as most important tools for building an appropriate therapeutic climate in which honest communication can flourish and better patient care and satisfaction can take place.⁶ The quality of interaction with the patients is positively related to trust and patient satisfaction. In most of Nepal, the quality of health care services has been questioned and considered generally low in quality by the public. These issues have been raised in the media, and most of the newspapers report that both in urban and rural areas and in public or private hospital the existing health facilities are very basic and the quality of trust and communication between the doctor and patients is very poor. In regards to the quality of health care services in Nepal the World Health Organization also makes remarks that in most part of the country in Nepal the existing health care services is very poor not only because of lack of resources and poor doctor-patient relationship but also because of lack of trust and inadequate or inappropriate communication between the doctor and the patient.⁷ Hence, to improve and to deliver the standard health care services to the underprivileged, unreached or even poorly reached population in the country both the health care providers and the patient must understand the value and importance of trust worthy relationship and effective communication between themselves so that the level of patients' satisfaction could improve and many of the unwarranted incidences between the doctors and the patients may likely to be eliminated.

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