Bengal Journal of Otolaryngology and Head Neck Surgery

Official Publication of The Association of Otolaryngologists of India, West Bengal

Volume 26 No. 2 - August, 2018

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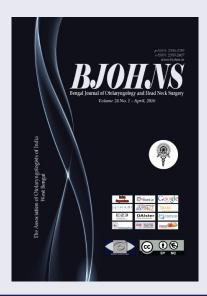
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From the Desk of the Editor

Medical professionals are passing through troubled times all over the world. Bureaucratic tyranny, lost autonomy, opprobrious attitude of the hospital administration and sagging morale of the health workforce have become serious concerns for the health professionals.

Another medical malady is engulfing us – slowly but surely. Dr Herbert L Fred had drawn our attention to the deficiency of clinical skills amongst doctors long back in 2005, which he termed as HYPOSKILLIA [Fred HL. Hyposkillia – Deficiency of clinical skills. Texas Heart Institute Journal 2005; 32(3):255-7].

Overdependence on investigations and technology often leads doctors to discount a significantly vast information that can be gathered from critical assessment of detailed medical history and pertinent physical examination.

High-tech medicine essentially bypasses the medical history and physical examination and, primarily on the basis of the patient's chief complaints, jumps directly to a slew of sophisticated and expensive investigationsbased on which the management plans are formulated. Ward rounds are replaced by chart rounds. The budding doctors gradually (but inevitably) develop a laboratory-oriented rather than a patient-oriented mindset. Increasing number of litigations contributed to the phenomenal rise in the quantity of investigative data per patient. But the ultimate fall-out is that, by curtailing history taking and physical examination or reducing interaction with the patient, the patient-doctor bondis effectively weakened, orrather, prevented from forming in the first place. Doctors start treating a number or some other test parameter rather than caring for the patient to whom the numbers belong. People start relying on the high-tech gadgets more thantheir doctor.

Our medical colleges must ensure that their students develop good communication skills, appreciate the importance of adequate medical history, can perform reliable physical examination and can critically assess the information they gather, develop reasoning skills to decide which tests, if any, are indicated and formulate appropriate management plan suitable for their patients.

The medical teachers must take the call to stem the 'habitual reliance on sophisticated medical gadgetry for diagnosis' and promote use of 'the brain- the most sophisticated, intricate machine, we will ever – and always have'.

Menile

Dr Saumendra Nath Bandyopadhyay Editor, Bengal Journal of Otolaryngology and Head Neck Surgery

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