

LEADING ARTICLE

PROFESSIONALISM

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Professionalism is more and more important and required to understand and practice since the world is becoming more and more complex and chaotic. Good Medical Practice is the professionalism in practice.¹ Meanings of "Profession", "Professional" and "Professionalism" had similarities and differences.

PROFESSION

The differentiating point of a profession from a technical work is the amount of knowledge. It is used to understand as profession is a job done using brain, education and different from laborer. It is easy to differentiate from laborer, but the line is thin and blurry to differentiate from a technician since it also needs some amount of education. In fact, in a living world, every work had learning from experience and formal or informal education. Even to work as a porter, someone needs training of lifting weight without strain to body and muscles. Riding a trishaw also needs some knowledge and experience. Previously there are three significant points to consider. One is the amount of knowledge. It covers past, present and future (causes, different management options, consequence or prognosis) and must be able to decide weighing risks and benefits of each option. Second is practical skill to conduct the own's choice smoothly. Third is attitude or ethics of performing only after considering the patients will, benefit-risk and equity and not to do things for own's interest only. During last decade, two more points are included in the characters of a profession; safety and

communication. Having a huge amount of knowledge and skills make the profession as a separated layer from the public because a member of common people could not comprehend or judge the decisions and performances. So the profession got the privilege of managing own members as a professional society members by the council members composed of same professions. At the same time, profession had the responsibility to let only competent candidates to be a member and to regulate to prevent non-ethical conducts.

PROFESSIONAL

Usually, the acts of the members of a profession are perfect, safe and to the interest of the clients/public. But the term perfect or error free is not possible for every time or every level. Among the members of a profession, there are different level of experiences and different level of special skills. If a doctor is competent and he is using his knowledge and skill as far as he can, one can say the act is professional. The word "Professional" is also used as a now referring a member of a profession. So, a "Professional" is a person doing things best and safe to the interest of the client. Not only a member of a profession can do his best, but also technicians and handworkers can do their best with good will.

When I went to a boot shop in Myanmar, they sold me one size smaller, near expire pair which is the only one left in the store persuading that it was a large cut and also would be larger a bit after wearing for some time. The salesman was short sighted, profit minded, concentrating only

to sell by cheating. In the contrary, when I went to a boot shop in New Zealand, the walking shoe store salesman did not push me to buy shoes, instead, he directed me to nearby hiking shoe store. Inside the hiking shoe store, the salesman refused to sell me the expensive boot I pointed, and advised me to choose a more suitable and cheaper one to use during a rocky mountain hiking. He is a customer orientated, competent one doing job professionally. Some added punctuality and reliability, keeping suitably detached from highly emotional situations as characters of professionals.² On the other hand, a member of a profession although automatically called a professional may be sometime self-orientated, not using his skills and effort, doing sub-optimal and the act may not be a professional.

PROFESSIONALISM

Professionalism is broader than profession. Profession considers the relation between patients and doctors. Professionalism considers the relation between public and the professional society. If a doctor is not competent enough and had harmed a patient, it is an ethical issue. Similarly, if a doctor drinks alcohol and operate a patient with the tremulous hands, it is also an ethical issue. Those two doctors may be punished by stopping license to practice (Sama). But naturally, a doctor, as a human may want to enjoy a drink. He can, if it does not harm a patient. But what about a doctor overdrunk on a Sunday and sleep under a roadside light pole? He does not harm any patient. Is it OK? Regarding a profession status, if the act is not crossing the ethical lines, it may be alright. But

from the point of professionalism, this act is eroding the public trust on the medical profession. Nobody is dying, but trust to the doctor profession is dying and it is against the professionalism.

To maintain the trust, apart from a good scholar (competent knowledge and skill, ethical, communicative and safe), a member of a profession need to demonstrate five other corner stones.

- Honesty
- Responsibility as a good human
- Altruism
- Accountability and
- Professional Social Responsibility as a good citizen.

He offers high quality service whether or not patients are capable of judging his quality. He continues to provide health care even when, as during a pandemic, he risks his own health.³ Yesterday, a doctor from China had proved altruism. The doctor who starts to notice the novel corona virus died because of pneumonia while treating the infected patients.

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