

How can we Doctors Protect Ourselves - Managing Medicolegal Aspects

Medical practice has undergone a sea change over the last few decades. Consumer Protection Act is now applicable to medical profession also. This has affected the doctor–patient relationship adversely and has converted it to one between service provider and customer. There has been sustained rise in lawsuits as well as violence against hospitals and doctors. It has become necessary for every practicing doctor to stay abreast of the ever-changing medical laws to protect him/herself, his/her family, and medical practice. Unfortunately, medical curriculum in India does not cover medicolegal aspects in-depth, and hence, there is as such dire need to bridge this gap.

Patients are increasingly aware of their rights with easy availability of information on internet and access to medical journals. Poor communication skills and increasing medical expenses can create dissatisfaction and lack of trust in doctors, which, in turn, can lead to medicolegal complaints. Most of the doctors pay less attention to medicolegal aspects and are unaware of principles of natural justice and how a judge would look into a particular case before delivering his/her judgment. We intend to provide information related to basic legal concepts and help doctors to acquire adequate knowledge to handle medicolegal issues.

Practicing doctors face a lot of difficulties when they receive a notice or summons with no proper guidance available to them. Prevention is better than cure, they say. This is so aptly applicable to medicolegal issues as well. We, at IJMPO, wish to help doctors to form a good defense of their case and help them to solve the matter. Hence, we have decided, over the next few years, to publish relevant medicolegal cases, judgments delivered by various courts/consumer commissions, practical problems faced by other doctors, as well as views of honorable judges on given matters. We will also help doctors to prepare

strategies to minimize errors and to bring appropriate changes to safeguard their clinical practice. Various aspects of medicolegal issues such as keeping medical records, issuing medical certificates, and discussion about medical negligence, consent, Consumer Protection Act, various other relevant acts, and licensing aspects will be covered in upcoming issues of this journal.

We are sure our readers will receive this medicolegal section well to make appropriate changes in their medical practice to safeguard themselves from medicolegal problems and practice fearlessly. To ask your doubts/questions, write to us on editor@ijmpo.org. We will try to address the queries in due course of time. Happy reading!

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