

Medical Error

HIDE OR SEEK?

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As the 21st century is known to be the era of technology and inventions, people believe that it has decreased the chances of error in every field including medical. This ends up putting a massive burden on doctors as the cause of a mistake is now mostly because of human error rather than anything else. What people fail to understand is at the end of the day doctors are only human and hence not perfect.

If by any chance a doctor has made a mistake, he goes through the agony of deciding whether to tell anyone or not, to hide or to seek? Your life becomes a nightmare and you start to question your abilities as a practitioner. You start to take extra care of your patient and be more attentive to the family, dreading of the day when they find out the truth. Fear and guilt become your shadows. You know what the right thing to do is but you just can't man up for the punishment you'll have to face.

Medical errors have the potential to harm patient-doctor relationship and it decreases the confidence of the patient in the health care system. Hence it is important to inform the errors to patient, be caring and honest and apologize to them. A doctor's wordings and emotions will highly effect the reaction and action taken by the patient and its family members hence it is best to be straightforward and fully inform the patient of the error made.

We live in a world where everyone around you is your competitor. Sympathy and support are rare forthcoming now days. You'll find criticism and mocking in every turn you take. Some will leave you alone and reflect to their own mistakes of the past while others will become over confident on being perfect and superior then you.

So what can a practicing doctor do? Recall your last mistake which ended in harming a patient. Discuss it with a colleague or a mentor and then notice their reaction. You'll realize no one's perfect. Physicians will always make mistakes. The decisive factor will be how one handles it. Patient safety and physician welfare will be well served if we can be more honest about our mistakes to our patients, our colleagues, and ourselves.