TITLE- SAVE THE SAVIOUR

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**ABSTRACT**-

Today the time has come when the saviour needs saving. There has been an increase in the incidence of attacks on doctors in recent times. It is important that some measures are taken to ensure the safety of doctors because only when the doctors are safe that they would be able to treat the patient without any hesitation or reluctance.

**MAIN ARTICLE**-

In the wake of the attack on a junior resident in Kolkata the safety of doctors is in question yet again. Attack on doctors isn’t something new. Doctors have had to face misbehaviour from the patient or the patient’s relatives for quite some time now. Usually it is just verbal but in some cases like the incident at NRS Medical College it is physical and violent enough to land the doctors as a patient in the hospital itself.

There are several incidences of attack on doctors. A retrospective study analysing the reported cases of violence against doctors showed an increasing trend. Delhi and Maharashtra had the maximum incidences of violence against doctors, majority being against resident doctors. More than half of the cases occurred during night shifts and 45% of the cases occurred in the emergency department. [1] In another study conducted on workplace violence experienced by doctors in a tertiary care hospital in Delhi showed that 47% of the doctors who participated in the study had experienced violence at work. Verbal abuse was the most common form (87.3%) and physical assault was more among the young doctors. Patients or their relatives were perpetrators in most of the cases. [2] Despite the improvement in the healthcare facilities, violence against doctors is increasing ever so drastically. [3] [4] This article published by Neha Madhiwalla and Nobhojit Roy regarding assault on doctors also mentions some points to prevent attacks on doctors and here are a few steps that add to the measures already written in the aforementioned article [5]

1. Attendants accompanying the patient to the hospital should be limited. This is because in Indian healthcare, majority of assaults on doctors are caused by relatives of the patients. [2] So limiting the number of attendants with patients would prevent them from doing this unlawful thing. Not more than 2 attendants should be allowed with the patient in an emergency setting and not more than one attendant should be allowed with the patient in an OPD setting.
2. Responsibility of the media- Media both print and electronic should not sensationalise any news of medical background without having complete knowledge of it. Media is one of the key factors that adds fuel to fire in the already degraded image of doctors in the public eye.[6] Recently a well renowned news reported barged into the emergency department of a hospital in Bihar with her camera crew. Then started asking questions to the doctors and nurses who were busy attending the patients which in practicality should have been asked to the government like questions pertaining to infrastructure, equipment, etc. This stint of hers was targeted to portray doctors in an abysmal light. The people who do not belong to the medical world do not know to what ends doctors go to save their patient’s lives, how much efforts they put in round the clock to treat patients. Medicine isn’t white and black. There is a lot of grey area in between and for those who do not have a medical background it might be difficult to understand. Also, the media like films, television serials should not showcase doctors in a bad light. On the contrary I think the media should help people understand the stand of doctors on controversial cases.
3. In many cases, no action is taken against the patient or his attendant who abuses the doctor physically or verbally. This is primarily because no case is filled by the assaulted doctor against such people. However, this needs to change. Doctors need to report any such cases of abuse and the government should punish unlawful behaviour of anybody who harms the doctor or vandalises the hospital. Moreover, at present there is no law which protects the medical personnel from this injustice. Some firm laws passed by the judiciary to protect doctors would certainly be a boon.
4. Doctors need to be more empathic and compassionate. They probably should try to optimise and reduce long waiting periods for the patients in the waiting rooms and try to improve communication with the patient and his relatives as much as possible. For example, it has repeatedly been seen that long queues in the hospital, lack of communication from the doctors and opaque billing systems are important predictors of violence in India.
5. Hospital Security- The security of the hospital should be tight i.e., the guards allocated at the hospital should be well equipped to jump into action and curb any violent activity when required.  
   To make sure no hell breaks loose in the hospital and nobody is injured good security is imperative. All the guards should be well equipped to break a fight if it happens. Secondly if they find attendants accompanying the patient coming to the hospital suspicious, they should deny them entry it the entry itself.  
   There should be enough number of security guards outside the hospital at all times and within close range so that they can come as soon as possible when needed.
6. Medical personnel should try to identify signs of violence amongst patients and their relatives. A study was conducted among nurses in a public hospital in Australia to identify the components of observable behaviour that indicates a potential for violence in patients and their relatives when presenting to emergency department. Five such distinct elements of observable behaviour were identified. These elements were conceptualised as a potential nursing violence assessment framework and described through the acronym STAMP -S=staring and eye contact T=Tone and volume of voice A=Anxiety M=Mumbling P=Pacing.[7] We can try and apply this method in an Indian setting as well. On a trial basis this method can be started in hospitals with high prevalence of violence against doctors and if the method seems beneficial it can be applied to the other hospitals as well.

In case of an attack do breaks out, there should be a standard protocol which should be followed by all the staff members in the hospital in order to prevent any injury to the doctor and other personnel as well as protecting the hospital property. This protocol should be practiced by hospital staff regularly. One such protocol is Code Purple used by many hospitals to alert the medical staff against potential violence and thus, calm the situation.[8]

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