**Letter to Editor**

**Title: Is our health in safe hands? – Getting the ‘right’ medical students**

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Medical profession once considered as a ‘noble profession’ is recently been under scanner for the deterioration in medical services. The decline is generally attributed to commercialization of services, gradually waning human values, and lack of empathy and communication skills. At a time when the discussion is on devising approaches to test the medical students for attributes such as empathy, good communication skills and concern for the less privileged ones, developing nations like India are suffering from the ‘Problem of too many’. On one hand, an apparently skewed doctor-patient ratio in India (0.7 physicians per 1000 people as compared to World’s average of 1.5) has led to overburdening of medical practitioners who practically have very limited time for their patients to empathize with. Students inadvertently follow their teachers and the vicious cycle continues. On the other hand, there has been a mushrooming of medical institutions to overcome this shortage of doctors that has led to commercialization of medical education to a certain extent. High cost of medical education has made it unaffordable to many, and very obviously merit has taken a back seat.

Presuming that the quality of students being admitted to medical schools has deteriorated, it is our duty to ensure that the medical students are permitted to graduate only if they are competent enough to deal with their patients holistically. But the reality is much more complex especially when many of the medical teachers believe in the concept of ‘mercy attempts’. Many others vouch for good results linking it to the ‘reputation’ of the department and the Institution. If the deteriorating trend continues, poking question haunting us would be ‘If our health and life are in safe hands?’ Instituting an exit examination for MBBS students can be a potent step to ensure that the MBBS graduates have adequate knowledge and skills to practice medicine. In this regard, medical teachers have the responsibility to ensure a positive change. ‘We are what we see’, and if things are to change we as medical teachers need to initiate the change for our students to follow.

All in all, we are inadvertently moving far from the concept of ‘Right medical student’, that demands an overhaul of medical education in India, whether it is conducting of medical entrance tests and fair opportunities for the deserving, or the approval of medical colleges by the regulatory bodies. It is often argued that either the right students are not joining the medical profession or they are not nurtured the right way. The onus to set the things right lies vastly with the medical teachers, who need to make sure that only those medical students competent enough to deal with their patients holistically are allowed to graduate.

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