

Guest Editorial



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DOCTOR SHOPPING SWAPPING AND HOPPING.

This is not sporadic to encounter in our contemporaneous medical practice. Among the many grounds, few outstanding motives stand worthy of highlighting. In the Occident, procuring Narcotics, Benzos, Stimulants and strong Pain killers are the most citable reasons. Such patients go to extreme lengths to fake symptoms, are very persuasive and manipulative. Various regulations have been introduced particularly in USA with a view to stalling such a trend. Mental illness sufferers like personality disorders, Hypochondriacs, Munchausen Syndrome constitute a fraction of such behaviour. Another arena is in Cosmetic Surgery seekers, going through web search and experimenting with some professionals aiming for a better outcome. In the Sports field, trying to illicitly obtain performance enhancing drugs stirs them up to indulge in this activity. In the Orient trying to achieve better financial package for various procedures invigorates certain sections of society to play a role in this arena. This particularly correlates well with some sections of our fraternity, seeking Web advertisements and Social media postings (sometimes with furtive promotions) inducing competition. Within the local neighborhood, discussions and palaver with friends and family about their illnesses generate profuse advice which prompts them into unrealistic expectations particularly with slow evolving medical conditions, promoting them towards multiple medical establishments. Paucity of effective communication and its breakdown sows the seeds of dissatisfaction stirring them towards such behavior. Identifying such patients can be fought with difficulty, though certain pointers like multiple consultations, ambiguity of symptoms, past excessive health seeking behavior help to identify them. Finally let us not belittle the GOOGLE DOCTOR which graduates such patients into half-baked Doctors. To counteract and minimize such activities, effective computerized records and improving communication skills (not breaching confidentiality) would help to stem the tide. Patient education too goes a long way in curbing this trend. Hope this will help our readers in identifying and managing this segment of our professional life.

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