

Guest Editorial



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FORGOTTEN ART OF PROGNOSTICATION

In the hustle and bustle of our busy work schedule as medical practitioners, we have forgotten a very important aspect of practice of Medicine i.e. the art of prognostication. Medical prognostication is a prediction of future medical outcomes of a treatment or a disease course based on medical knowledge. It is a fundamental and a traditional core clinical skill in the practice of Medicine, but unfortunately, hardly practised. In the “Art and Science” of Medicine, prognostication is an art which like any other skill needs to be acquired, practised and exhibited. Prognosis is most complex and difficult component of clinical medicine, followed by diagnosis and treatment. As a physician it is important to prognosticate as it directs decision making and management strategy, as well as assists the patient and his family in taking judicious medical decisions.

The complexity of Prognostication is based on the prognostication triad constituting of disease severity, management and extraneous factors. There are several estimators and predicting tools for calculating the prognosis in different types of diseases. But an very important addition to the skill is the physicians clinical experience and intuition. Patients want information about their disease condition in an honest way and it is our duty to provide it. Integrated validated prediction models with clinical predictions of survival can make physicians better prognosticators. Formal training on the skill of prognostication in the medical education (some aspects of communication skills now included in Competency Based Medical Education) can make the present students future ready. Documentation of the communication with the patient regarding the prognosis is a medicolegal requirement of proper documentation and should be adhered to.