**Professionals for sale**

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Last week I took my son to a very well-known chest specialist in Islamabad. It’s not the first time I have consulted him, but it’s the first time I am choosing to express my anger at how a noble profession of a doctor often referred to as a ‘Messiah’ is being treated by many unprofessionally, lacking any compassion or empathy. The doctor in question here is highly competent undoubtedly, but literally without exaggeration, he spends a maximum of two minutes per patient. When I entered his office, I had already started feeling activated and anxious hoping I would get all my questions answered. Within the two minutes he quickly checked my son’s throat, listened to his chest and prescribed tons of medicine, which would ensure recovery for anyone. As I challenged him on the prescribed steroid asking how bad the chest is, he got agitated, shut me down and out we walked in less than two minutes. I feel as if I had just returned from running a marathon and oddly enough grateful for even those two minutes which naturally weren’t for free, but came after paying a reasonably high consultation fee. I experienced this similarly with yet another renowned skin specialist in the twin cities, who again gave a long list of expensive skin ointments, but barely spent even five minutes paying attention to the problem at hand.

[Biden says he’s 'winning' enough states to reach 270 electoral votes](https://nation.com.pk/05-Nov-2020/biden-says-it-s-clear-he-s-winning-enough-states-to-reach-270-electoral-votes)

What really irks me is that I could still demand those two minutes riding on my privileged background where many of the poor patients waiting in the clinic could not even question anything holding their peace forever.

It’s a shame that a profession that involves healing is treated with such callousness and indifference. It has merely become a business of quantity versus quality and the agenda is simply to fit in as many patients as possible. Of course, with the number of degrees hanging in their offices and the insane number of patients they see on a daily basis, it’s not claim to fame that the treatment is working for many and thus they keep going back for the ‘ilaaj’ served crudely in a matter of a few minutes.

The word doctor comes from the Latin word for ‘teacher,’ itself from docēre, meaning, “to teach.” The idea is for the doctor to spend reasonable time with the patient to not only suggest the treatment but also help him understand what the disease is and address the questions.

[Trump prematurely declares victory in must-win states](https://nation.com.pk/05-Nov-2020/trump-prematurely-declares-victory-in-must-win-states)

There is already a power differential in this profession. As a patient walks into the doctor’s clinic he is vulnerable at many levels. He is vulnerable to the disease that he is already going through and then he is vulnerable to the healer who he is seeking healing from. Naturally he would have valid questions like the cause of the illness, treatment options, side effects or a prevention plan. He is a student who wants to learn more about what he is going through. And apart from this knowledge he is nervous and anxious and is hoping that this information is delivered with understanding and kindness of his fretful mental state.

Is all of this possible in two minutes? Is it fair to treat the vulnerable person sitting before you with such dismissiveness and arrogance? Do you do it because you know you can and the patient, a hostage to his illness, becomes a hostage to your insensitivity?

It all comes to the intention behind our actions. These doctors have to ask themselves what is the drive behind choosing the profession they have chosen and more importantly what core belief do they carry when seeing professions? Are they here to help and heal or simply make more money and yet some more?

[FGEHA tasked to launch different schemes of 'Naya Pakistan' housing targets](https://nation.com.pk/04-Nov-2020/fgeha-tasked-to-launch-different-schemes-of-naya-pakistan-housing-targets)

Nowhere am I suggesting that the fees have to be less. I am also not suggesting that they spend half an hour on one patient and start a counselling session within the diagnostic session. But is it unreasonable to demand a little more time than two minutes; a time filled with compassion and empathy?

I seriously think that the health ministry needs to look into the ways private practice is being administered in Pakistan. A simple rule of only allowing a fixed maximum number of patients who each would be given an average 15 minutes could add more quality to this practice. Even the timing of the practice needs to be seen. For example, how can doctors who work for 12 hours a day maintain safe practice. It’s only natural for them to become more negligent as they push their physical limitations to fit in more and more patients.

Let’s raise our voice against this malpractice and I deliberately choose this word as for me all these factors indicate the difference between a responsible and caring or negligent and heartless doctor’s practice.