

# Sixty Percent of People do not Discuss their Sexual Behavior and Performance with the Doctor when they go for Consultation

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## ABSTRACT

On Doctor's Day 2013 a survey was conducted to assess the perception of doctor-patient relationship among the people and the expectations of the patients from the doctors. Data was collected using a questionnaire came up with some interesting changing trends among the people with regard to doctor-patient relationship.

**Keywords:** Family physician, specialist, sexual history, etiquette based medicine, privacy, health insurance

A survey of 452 people was conducted by Heart Care Foundation of India and eMedinewS on the occasion of Doctors Day 2013. The objective of the survey was to assess the perception of doctor-patient relationship among the people and the expectations of the patients from the doctors.

The survey included patients, social workers, RWAs, morning walkers, college students and government employees from NCR Delhi and consisted of middle to high socioeconomic strata. Data was collected using a questionnaire, which the survey participants were asked to answer. The data came up with some interesting changing trends among the people with regard to doctor-patient relationship.

## NEW TREND TO DIRECTLY GO TO SPECIALISTS

The survey revealed that only 42% had a family physician. When suffering from an illness, 52% of the people would directly opt to visit a specialist and not a family physician, which is not a good trend. The traditional concept of a 'family physician' that looked after all the health needs of a family regardless of his/her specialization, is now changing.

## SEXUAL PREFERENCES, CHOICES AND BEHAVIORS

Eighty percent of the people want their doctors to ask about the sexual history in confidence. They feel

shy coming out with the history as most of the times patients are accompanied by the relations. The survey found that 60% of the patients have never opened out to their doctors and 80% of the doctors have never asked them about the sexual history. This brings them to seek help from sex quacks and advise from friends and neighborhood.

The survey found that people are sexually active even at elderly age. The proportion of man reporting no sex is 20% at age 51-60 and 87.5% at age above 75. In women, reporting no sex is 100% after the age of 70. About 16.17% of men reported that they are facing erectile dysfunction and 17.64% are having premature ejaculation during sexual act.

The survey enlisted that the public wanted the following to be asked to them in isolation in person or through a document about the following:

- Are you sexually active
- Are you satisfied with your sexual life
- Are you sexually attracted to men, women or both
- Do you have multiple partners

## PEOPLE WANT EXPERIENCED DOCTORS

Sixty-five percent prefer senior doctors with white hair to treat them as they can provide better patient care than their younger fashionable counterparts with less clinical experience. Hundred percent of the people said that if their doctor cannot practice 'compassion based medicine' at least practice 'etiquette-based medicine'.

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Sixty percent of the people put their faith in the capabilities of their doctor and not on their dress code. Fifty-seven percent however check the credentials and qualifications of a doctor before visiting them for consultation. This is a new trend in the society.

When asked about the criteria of a good doctor 90% people said that for them availability and behavior of a doctor is more important than competency. "What is the use of a competent doctor if he is not available and is arrogant": Was the common question asked by them?

When questioned about the etiquette based medicine, 84% people said that they would like their doctor to call them with their name; would like the doctor to introduce about his credentials and competency; would like to explain and reason out the plan and duration of treatment.

### PATIENTS WANT PRIVACY

Forty percent of the people did not want doctors to be their friends on Facebook. New International guidelines also warn doctors not to be connected with their patients on facebook. Eighty percent of the people wanted that their personal health information should not be leaked to any one without asking them including the spouse and their name should not be shouted outside the operation theatre or the intensive care unit (ICU).

### PATIENTS DO NOT LIKE SMOKING DOCTORS

Eighty-one percent people reported being disturbed when they saw their doctors smoking in public and would not like to be treated by a doctor who smoked in front of them.

### PATIENTS WANT DOCTORS TO WRITE LEGIBLY

Sixty-seven percent people felt that their doctors should have legible handwriting and favored an electronic prescription instead.

### PATIENTS WANT AFFORDABLE, QUALITY AND SAFE MEDICAL CARE

Seventy-eight percent people felt that medical profession is becoming commercialized today and should be made more affordable for a common man.

Seventy-two percent people said that doctors should be transparent in their fee. Fifty-nine percent people felt that doctors' charging less fee is not their concern. But, 41% were of the opinion that doctors should charge less as their profession is a noble one.

### PATIENTS WANT DOCTORS TO SPEND MORE TIME WITH THEM

Forty-nine percent people reported being satisfied with less 15 minutes of a doctor's time; 26% wanted their doctor to spend more than 15 minutes with them and the rest wanted time till they were satisfied. Fifty-four percent people said that their doctors never advised them about adult vaccination. This needs immediate attention. Fifty-five percent said that their blood pressure had never been checked in both arms. Forty-nine percent people said that they would prefer to take a dietary advice from their doctor and not from a dietitian.

### PATIENT WANTS SECOND OPINION FROM THE SAME DOCTOR

Sixty percent people wanted to get a second opinion from their regular doctor if they are not satisfied. Seventy-two percent people do not want doctors to treat them just on clinical grounds but prefer getting investigated first. When advised investigations, 57% would ask their doctor to suggest a lab, while the rest said that they would choose their own lab.

### PATIENT ETIQUETTE

Forty-six percent people said that they preferred to call their doctor directly to fix an appointment and not the secretary. When calling for an appointment, 53% would choose to call on a mobile number and not the landline, whether the call is to the doctor or the secretary.

### IGNORANCE IS STILL HIGH

- Forty-seven percent persons did not have any health insurance.
- Forty-nine percent did not know that when they are hiring a room in a private hospital, the insurance covers only 1% of the sum amount insured for the bed.
- Fifty-two percent of the people do not know that error of judgment or difference of opinion is not an act of negligence on the part of the doctor.
- Forty-eight percent people were unaware of the fact that a doctor is supposed to possess only an average degree of skill and knowledge and not the maximum degree of skill and knowledge when treating a patient.
- Thirty percent of the people were unaware that creating violence in the hospital premises is an offence.