

Professionalism and Commitment – Now and Then!

Jim Reid

The Role of the Doctor

- **Scientists**
- **Health professionals**
- **Leaders**
- **Advocates**
- **Teachers and learners**
- **Members of the healthcare team and the broader health sector.**

NZMJ 04 Nov 2011 (124) 1345:

Professionalism – What is it in Medicine?

- **Difficulty to define – carries many connotations and implied meanings.**
- **May mean different things to different people.**
- **Doctors may have definite ideas about what constitutes professionalism, but these may be different to those of the patient.**

Professionalism

Attributes

- The relationship between medicine and society – a social contract with expectations and obligations on and to both.
- Forms the basis of patient – doctor trust

Professionalism

Doctors are committed to

- **Integrity**
- **Compassion,**
- **Altruism**
- **Continuous improvement**
- **Excellence**
- **Working in partnership with other members of the health care team.**

Smith R. J R Soc Med.2006 Feb; 99(2) 48-50

Professionalism

- Patient expectations mirror societal expectations of medicine.
- “As professionals, physicians are committed to the health and well being of individuals and society through ethical practice, profession led regulation, and high personal standards of behaviour”

Osler 1901

Professionalism

Society's Expectations

- Service
- Competence
- Altruism
- Morality and integrity
- Accountability
- Transparency
- Source of objective advice
- Promotion of public good

Medicines Expectations

- Trust
- Autonomy
- Self-regulation
- Adequately funded system
- Participation in policy
- Shared (patients and society) responsibility for health
- Monopoly
- Status and rewards – respect and status, and financial.
- University of Ottawa 2010

Commitment!

A doctor must work eighteen hours a day and seven days a week. If you cannot console yourself to this, get out of the profession.

Martin H. Fischer 1879 - 1962

Professionalism in NZ

The Public's Perspective – the top 5

- Honesty
- Listens
- Treats with respect
- Competence
- Provides understandable information

Professionalism

The Public's Perspective - The Bottom 5!

- Has integrity
- Improves community health
- Has a sense of humour
- Is thorough
- Is open minded

Hutchinson M, Reid J. PCMJ 2010

The Problem

How is the degree of professionalism and commitment measured?

The Changes

- Skirts
- Collars and ties
- White coats
- Ridiculous hours of work
- Continuity
- Availability

What Remains

- Integrity
- Compassion
- Altruism
- Continuous improvement
- Excellence
- Working in partnership with other members of the health care team.

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The Professionals

The Baby Boomers 1946 – 1964

- Work – Centric
- Independent
- Goal Oriented
- Competitive
- Has seen increasing social and economic equality
- Medicine – “a workaholic’s idea of heaven!”

Generation X

1960's to 1980

- Individualistic (casual disdain for authority)
- Technologically adept
- Flexible (Cf workaholic parents)
- Value of work / life balance.

GENERATION Y

1981-1995

- Individuals (Dress, appearance and social media online)
- Like choice
- Know what they want
- Informal
- Work / life balance
- Immediate gratification

PROFESSIONALISM

A NEW DEFINITION- Gen Y?

Old Professional

- Isolation
- I don't make mistakes & I cover my tracks when I do
- My personal interests are personal.
- I am expected to have the answers
- I hold on to power

New

- Open and accessible
- I may make a mistake and I apologise when I do
- My personal interests make me human
- I know where to find the answers
- I share power

PROFESSIONALISM

The Role of the Doctor as Health Professionals

- To listen
- Be non judgmental
- Be compassionate
- Have integrity
- **Merit trust**
- Integrate information
- Provide medical / surgical interventions
- Practise specific clinical skills
- Identify and minimise risk
- Have ability to assess healthcare needs
- Be culturally sensitive
- Maintain their own health
- Support and educate patients
- Assist in decision to move to supportive care including end of life decisions