

Why I Detest Going to the Doctor's

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Did you have an 'affair' marriage? Did you know that your wife had this condition before you got married to her?" These were the questions that greeted me when I recently visited a doctor for chest pain and dizziness. I stared blankly at him while my husband tried to stay composed, trying to hide the expression of disbelief that was clearly visible on his face.

The doctor commented on everything, starting from the colour of my lipstick to my willpower to control anxiety attacks. But he refused to listen to my complaints or offer a comprehensive diagnosis. Another specialist declined to even look at the blood work that they had prescribed because they "considered it unnecessary" as I had found temporary relief from my persistent medical complaint. Even I, with absolutely no knowledge about medicine, could clearly discern the dipping levels in some of the required test reports. And yet, the doctor barely took a look at the report, declaring, "Well, you don't seem to have the problem presently, so let's forget about the reports". Ok, I thought, let's just forget about it as well as the thousands of takas we spent on these 'unnecessary' tests.

In short, they won't go deeper into a problem because that's clearly not their job. You came to them with a 'particular'



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complaint and they'll only look at that problem. Your blood works might state otherwise, but as one doctor told me, "We know better than these reports. Do you want to believe us or do you want to trust these so-called blood works?" You have no other option but to meekly accept whatever they state.

If you are a woman, the visit to the doctor's is nothing less than an ordeal, especially when you have a man accompanying you. While you are stating your medical complaints, the doctor will look straight at your male companion, explaining their diagnosis of your ailment to him. How will you, a mere woman, possibly understand medical jargons like 'flu', or 'thyroid' or 'bronchitis'? Your only job at a doctor's office is to sit primly and smile while the person who is supposed to be treating you ignores you completely, treating you like the furniture in their office. If you do manage to get a word in edgewise, they give you a sparse look, exasperated at your offense and go back to talking to the only other sensible person present there.

Usually, when you complain of a chest pain or a stomach ailment, a doctor is supposed to ask you a ton of questions, at least in other countries they do. They'll enquire about your family history and will often come up with a diagnosis that proves that you are actually suffering from a completely

different ailment. The stomach ache or the chest pain was only a symptom. Over here, most often than not, the doctors will solely focus on the problem at hand. Moreover, they will just not take you seriously until it's developed into something dangerous. Panic attack? That's not a thing. Just deal with it. Endometriosis? Not a thing, again! Live with it. Unless you can convince them that you are dying, they will not take you seriously. Apparently all you need is willpower to solve these problems. Unfortunately, it's these small problems that result in fatal diseases. Why should we wait till we are at the throes



of death instead of getting treatment for the problem whilst it's still treatable? Even if the problem isn't fatal, why should we have to live with it and compromise with the value of our lives?

Then there are the doctors who will take it to the other extreme and give only a gloom and doom scenario. "Tsk. Tsk. You should have come to me with this much sooner," they'll say, looking gravely at your reports. But I did visit a doctor regarding this problem just a few months ago, you'll cry. "Yeah, but you didn't come to me," he'll answer snidely. You'll

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then be loaded with a bunch of medical jargons and explanations about how serious your condition is and your low chances at survival and so on and so forth. There is no word of comfort or hope. Doctors in other countries where many Bangladeshis chose to go (at considerable cost) make it a point to show a positive attitude to the patient. Many times it has been seen that the condition that the doctor at home had condemned to be impossible to cure, is actually quite treatable and it's not really as bad as your doctor would have you believe. In short, it's either understatements or exaggerations when it comes to your doctor's diagnoses.

Of course there are exceptions. For every doctor who frightens your already very ill mother with unnecessary facts and details, there will be another one who ensures that the last days of your cancer-stricken mother is easy and more or less pain free. For every doctor who turns off their phone after their work hours to avoid the calls of those 'pesky patients,' there is one who will rush to your house after hearing your distressed tone over the phone.

Unfortunately, the number of the conscientious, dutiful, attentive doctors are, to be very honest, far and between. So until we get more doctors who care more about their patients than money, I think I'll endure this chest pain instead of enduring the personal questions and empty words of medical professionals.