**ROLE OF FAMILY IN MEDICAL DECISION MAKING**

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If we really focus on the key words of my topic “Role of Family” in medical decision making, then a variety of questions will come to our mind. Is it correct to depend on the decision of a family to treat the patient? Will the family be held responsible if the patient’s condition will be worse if not treated in proper time? What role does family play that helps doctor for disease diagnosis and treatment?

Let us now consider one by one. We shall discuss both the positive and negative aspects of each and every question that we mentioned above and I will share with you some of my personal experiences.

Is it correct to depend on the decision of a family to treat the patient?In my opinion, yes it is necessary to ask the members of the family to further carry on the treatment that the patient needs. Because if anything goes wrong and then the family has all rights to lodge case against the doctor. If in case the patient has no family members around as in case of certain accidents, traumas etc, the doctor has full rights to provide the upmost treatment that he can. Let me give my personal example: When I was in hostel four years back, I had acute stomach ache in the midnight. I was immediately admitted to hospital without informing my parents. The doctors had to treat me in the best possible way as they could before my parents reached the place because it was their duty to save my life and calm down my severe pain.

Will the family be held responsible if the patient’s condition be worse if not treated on time?Yes off course, if the family ignores the physicians’ advice for further treatment of the disease and delays in decision making, then it may aggravate the disease and put the patient in worse condition. It’s better for the family to take quick decisions if the physician has advised so. Sometimes the ladies of the family hesitate to go to the physician to ask for treatment of the problems they have and as a result they die being untreated or due to delayed treatment. I can give a very bad example for this. My grandmother who was from a typical Indian conservative family died of cervical cancer as she hesitated to go to the doctor to explain her problems. Even if she wanted to do so but my grandfather’s strict attitude that ladies mustn’t move out of the home made her to drop down her decision. When the condition was extremely bad, she consulted doctor but was in vain. She died within a year even if she had undergone surgery, chemotherapy and radiotherapy. So one must forget about the religious rituals and customs in order to avail the best possible treatment of disease earlier so that it can be cured.

What role does family play that helps doctor for disease diagnosis and treatment? Family plays a major role in disease diagnosis and treatment especially in infants, children and old age people. Because the relatives that accompany the patients to the doctor usually explain the problems that the patient has and the symptoms that they observe. If the patient is able to explain himself, then its better but in case of children or infants, the mother is the best observer. Sometimes the relatives or the patient himself start influencing doctor in the method of treatment but it is not at all a good option. A doctor must take only his own decision in treatment. Nevertheless the patients must listen to the physicians’ advice and opt for the best, adequate and effective treatment of the disease.