

EDITORIAL

'Ihsan' in Medicine - The Key to Ethical Conduct for Muslim Medical ProfessionalsFahisham Taib^{1,2}¹ Department of Paediatrics, School of Medical Sciences, Universiti Sains Malaysia, 16150 Kubang Kerian, Kelantan, Malaysia.² Hospital Universiti Sains Malaysia, Health Campus, Universiti Sains Malaysia, 16150 Kubang Kerian Kelantan, Malaysia.

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The journey to becoming physician is full of challenges from medical malpractice, medical errors and unwanted outcomes. Healthcare professionals often practice defensive medicine to avoid potential litigations and legal proceedings. Islamic principles of Iman (faith) and Ihsan (a call to virtue) are essential concept in fostering compassionate and ethical practice. 'Ihsan' is derived from the Arabic root word that signifies goodness and perfection. It can also be literally means kindness to others. In a medical context, it encourages healthcare professionals to go beyond compliance with ethical standards. This is practically shown by being sincere in daily work and excellent in completing tasks and duties (1). 'Ihsan' is about worshiping God as if one sees Him, which translates into a profound sense of accountability in clinical practice (2).

Professionalism is an evolving concept and influenced by sociocultural, religious, and fraternity expectations. It requires experiential learning, perseverance in observation and role modelling in daily professional conduct. Professionalism is defined as "a set of values, behaviours, and relationships that underpins the trust the public has in doctors", emphasizes the importance personal values that would enhance the patient-physician relationship and health outcomes (3). If these professional values are not preserved, this could lead to harm to patients, loss of trust and integrity.

Healthcare professionals should view their work as a form of service to humanity, fostering a deeper connection with their patients rather than seeking for monetary gain. In principle, our daily obligations and duties, these are considered as part of 'ibadah' and monitored by God. Unfortunately, secularization of understanding has caused many unethical approaches in medicine such as offering non-evidence-based treatment, failing to maintain confidentiality or integrity or taking advantage of patients' vulnerability. Incorporating both ihsan and professionalism into contemporary medical practice can be challenging. This is primarily due to the healthcare environment often seeking financial gains, leading to a disconnect responsibility to the needs of patients.

In Islam, religion greatly influences behavior and practice. One's action should conform to maqasid al-shari'ah which are the preservation of life, and health, progeny, intellect, and wealth (4). By committing to excellence in care through compassion and empathy, healthcare providers can transform the patient's experience while upholding the highest ethical standards. This set of moral rules and principles should guide healthcare professionals on how pursue his/her professional responsibilities. Modern understanding of ethics is rules are governed by human conscience and moral integrity, without any religious input (5). Without ihsan, our actions could result in various negative perspectives such as mental health issues related to lack of compassion, decline in patients' care, erosion of professional relationship, and unprofessional behaviours with others.

In conclusion, integrating ihsan into medical practice is vital for a compassionate healthcare environment. By prioritizing excellence, empathy, and ethical conduct, healthcare professionals can significantly enhance patient care while also improving their own mental well-being. Ihsan perhaps is one of the important elements that fosters a culture of kindness and respect with the understanding that all our actions have vertical relationship with God.

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