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RCOG WORLD CONGRESS 2022
13 - 15 JUNE

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Practicing medicine in the "Post-Truth Era"

The COVID-19 pandemic has proven the difficulties we face in modern-day life. The response to vaccination programmes around the world has shown the magnitude of the trust issues many people in the public have with the medical community and the health care services. Many people decided to follow shady evidence and advice from many sources. Suddenly, advice from the World health organization, the Centre for disease control and the NHS leaders are not believed and trusted. While evidence from influencers, youtubers and tiktokers took the upper hand.
Mass demonstrations occurred in many parts of the world opposing lockdowns, travel restrictions and mandatory vaccinations.

People have died because they ended up drinking bleach that has been advertised by politicians and talk show hosts as a medication of choice for COVID-19.

The gap between the science community and the conspiracy theorists has become so obvious. The Internet has definitely played a major role in this too. Social media platforms have been accused of orchestrating some of these problems and in other instances of turning a blind eye towards these propaganda machines going round these platforms.

We all had these clients who do not trust the medical advice and do not accept the common protocols and the usual medical practice which is completely within their rights.

As doctors, we share a responsibility for these issues. News of inaccurate research and publications. Even fraudulent ones became more common than before. Unfortunately many people put their egoes before their honesty and integrity. Many have major conflicts of interest and are sponsored by mega pharmaceutical companies and industries the way sports people are sponsored by sneakers companies. These companies are not the villains here, without them lots of the progress we see today wouldn't have occured. However, it is up to the researcher or medical professional to decide when these are appropriate or not before starting to advertise and campaign for.

While guidelines and protocols were essential to standardize care and support evidence based medicine. As we have seen increasingly lately with the pandemic and with our daily jobs , many patients want more than just doctors, midwives and nurses who follow algorithms and charts. Individualized care based on evidence must be the keyword here. A marriage between modern day medicine and alternative medicine must be more amicable. More holistic approach to problems must be provided for our patients. Multidisciplinary addressing of the issues must be the norm. Honesty with limitations and patient expectations must be clear.

Patients are more likely to benefit from a clear plan from the start including possibility of failures and shortcomings of the possible options. They would definitely benefit from plans that include medical/surgical approach if needed along with social support, psychological support and easy to understand clear and honest information that includes self help techniques and support groups. They are also more likely to appreciate someone who listens and understands their perspective and reasons that might not fit with the algorithms followed and try to individualize a suitable and agreeable plan .

We are being taught that doctors and medical professionals are leaders and educators. It is more important to know that we are here to serve the patients and in a team trying to solve their problem , our role is to provide suggestions to the captain of each team who happens to be the patient.

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