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Health care – is it Caring or a Commercial Enterprise?

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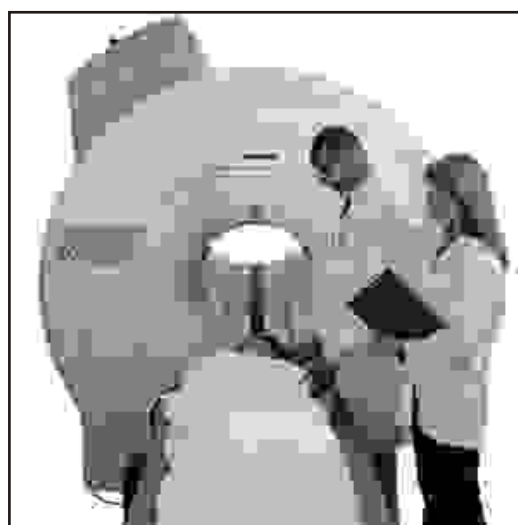
Over the ages health care has evolved from being associated with religion and priests to science and secular health care workers. Medicine that was practiced as a calling has turned into a commercial enterprise today. Commercial enterprise is driven by the motive of profit. With this change in role, health care workers have faced a dilemma of reconciling medical practice from service to a commercial enterprise.

Profit drives the commercial enterprise. Profits can be only increased if the services provided by the hospital are utilized regularly. As a result doctors are under tremendous pressure to use the services that are provided by the institution. It leads to unnecessary investigations. This adds costs as well as discomfort to the patients. The hospitals tend to increase their profits by reducing their expenditure. It leads to purchase of equipments that are lowest priced in the market. Sometimes these products may be of low quality or may not meet the standards. This practice may put the life of the patient in danger.

Pharmaceutical industry cannot directly market their products to the consumers (patients). To diagnose the disease and to prescribe appropriate treatment a physician is needed. To increase the sale of their products, pharmaceutical industry has to influence the prescribing practices of the doctor. They do it

various means like advertisements, gifts and use of medical representatives. All these activities may compromise the role of the physician as a guardian of patients health.

How do health care workers turn from being a commercial enterprise to become a caring physician? Health care workers need to go back to their roots and make patients the central focus of attention. They need to practice medicine that is rationale and evidence based. They need to cultivate humanism in their lives. Society also needs to support the endeavour of the physicians to practice good medicine. It also need mechanisms to supervise the functioning of medical instiutions. _____●



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