

RCPSYCH GRAND ROUNDS
SHORT MENTAL HEALTH
STORIES OF DOCTORS:
SAD AND HAPPY LIVES



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Disclaimer

Consent has been taken from the doctor or family member for the presentation

The description is purely for academic purposes

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Doctor 1



The 45-year-old doctor bought her 18-year-old son for consultation on addiction-related problems.

When she first met for the first time:

- Her husband died 6 months ago due to carcinoma
 - Her son started using Heroin.
- We admitted and treated her son. We followed him for three years, and he was fine.
- I never bothered to ask her how she was coping.
- But, after 3 years of her son treatment, she messaged me
- "Doc, I am unwell, I am not able to handle the anxiety. I want to talk to you".



Doctor 1



History is as follows:

- Lost mother at a young age. Father married again and she couldn't handle it when she was young
- Stayed in a hostel most of the time, couldn't make good friends and found peace in spirituality.
- Anaesthetist by profession
- Had epilepsy at the age of 35, diagnosed as Mesial Temporal Sclerosis
- Initially, work used to give her peace, but she was unable to handle multiple responsibilities after the death of her husband there were multiple complaints from the workplace.
- She suffered from severe anxiety, was unable to focus on work for the last 1 year, and worried about her son and his future for the last 1 year. She also used to feel low most of the time. After evaluation, she was diagnosed with depression.



Doctor 1

I started her on medication and referred her to meet a local psychiatrist for therapy.

After 2 months, she stopped meds, telling me that spirituality would help, worried about side effects of meds.

- However, she could not cope with the anxiety.

Again, she had a relapse of symptoms, and I requested to go to therapy.

She went for therapy but the problems at workplace went up. She could not share her problems at work, this further escalated her problem

Suddenly got a call from the son that one day she was found unconscious with ampoules of anaesthetic drugs and admitted to ICU. After 2 weeks, she died.

In a year following her death, son relapsed into substance use.

Learnings

Stigma to reveal about mental health concerns at workplace due to perceived discrimination

Family Responsibilities + work requires a lot of support, which is lacking

Difficulty to demarcate clinical depression (requiring medical attention) vs stress

Easy access to medications make anesthesia doctors more vulnerable

DOCTOR 2
MIGRATION &
MENTAL
HEALTH



Doctor 2

A friend of mine called me for the first time after 15 years.

I want to meet you for a consultation. I said yes.

I asked “Btw how is your wife? (He is the first one to get married in our friend group & her wife was also my classmate in high school)

He said he will meet & talk...

Doctor 2

- He was one of the brightest students in our batch and graduated from one of the best colleges in India.
- He got married during his internship. For four years, he attempted US MLE and could not get through.
- There were interpersonal issues between them due to studying not working, which led to separation.

On evaluation:

- Social anxiety Disorder started in MBBS- no friends, staying alone
- Depression: precipitated by IPR issues + PG preparation

At the time of consultation:

- In the process of divorce
- Doing his PG
- Away from family

Doctor 2

Though medication helped him to improve his anxiety and ability to cope with stress, his life stressors continued to maintain sub-syndromal depressive symptoms.

He attained full remission after 3 years-

- When he went back to family

- Completed divorce

- Finished MRCEM

- Got a job in UK

- Working at his hometown

He maintained well for 1 year on Fluoxetine 40mg and Lamotrigine 100mg before he migrated to UK

Doctor 2



- Couldn't continue meds after 2 months, due to stigma of revealing
- Excessive workload: Number of patients are way less compared to India, but the support systems are minimal

“Sometimes I use to carry the trolley to get an X-ray”

“My boss told, they will sue you for not doing this, we all learnt in a hard way you need to learn, else get out to India” I use to get panic attacks after hearing these things. I couldn't even talk to him if I have troubled.

“Finally, when I told about my past mental health condition, they asked me to seek help, I couldn't get a consultation with therapist, also they asked me to resign”.

He resigned and returned to India



Doctor 2

- Away from family
- Staying alone
- Long working hours- “ I used to feel tiered by the end of the day, I couldn’t do anything after I am back home, I always used to be preoccupied about facing my boss tomorrow with a complicated case”
- Off-medications

All these factors contributed to relapse

Learnings

Undetected & Untreated mental health concerns led to divorce

Stigma led to delayed help seeking

Migration nationally and internationally- lack of family support (culturally away from Indian family system)

Unsupportive work environments

THANK YOU

