

## A Tale of Two Worlds: From Head to Tail

We are living in an era where medical science is advancing by leaps and bounds. There was a time when the gynecologist who brought a child into this world was her/his mentor cum physician. With further advancement, etiologies and pathophysiologies of placental infarcts and neonatal stroke were found to be different. This led to the formation of a new tertiary specialty called Pediatrics, and hence a pediatrician was born (all against the wills and whims of the gynecologist). With more knowledge of the subject, further diversification occurred and various Pediatric subspecialties developed. And now we are in a world where offshoots of subspecialties are also coming up (like movement specialist in Pediatric neurology, who is only interested in your “moves”; an epileptologist whose professional profile is exclusively to search spikes and sharp waves and slow waves in various electroencephalographic montages).

But in the same world of advancement lives a different world. A world of common people – for whom if you have a prefix as “Dr”, you are neither “Mr” or “Mrs” but a “Dr.”, a demigod who should know a cure to every ailment irrespective of whatever your specialty is. Here I will quote few examples to whom I was testimony to:

1. “Are you a lady doctor?”, –A middle-aged man peeped into my room (which clearly stated my name and qualification as Pediatric neurologist) and asked.
  - “Yes”. *Undoubtedly I am a doctor and unquestionably a lady.*
  - “Ok. My wife is 2 months pregnant and she requires a regular check-up. Kindly do so..”
  - “*But I am not qualified to do so sir*”, I replied.
  - “But you said you are a lady doctor....also you treated my relative’s son...he is better now ...he only referred me to you.”

I tried explaining him my specialization (that I deal only with children and that too with neurological problems) but he had a better explanation that as his wife is a patient and you are a doctor, so is there question of any if’s and but’s.

2. A 2-year-old child who had global developmental delay was brought to my clinic with few blood tests and a normal MRI brain. After history and examination father questioned “Dr., what is the cause

of his illness”.

*“I need to do a few blood tests to confirm the diagnosis”.* I answered.

“But all the blood tests are done already. Look at these... All are normal”...He forwarded towards me a pile a paper.

Those were complete blood count, renal function test, liver function test, calcium, vitamin D3 and many others.

*“No..No.. I need to do certain different and specialized tests.”* I insisted.

“But these blood tests are all normal...How can a child have all his blood tests normal and still have problem...His brain is also normal as his MRI is normal”. He objected strongly.

I repeated, *“I need to do certain special blood tests”*...(I was thinking of doing whole genome sequencing to find the cause of his global developmental delay and he was thinking... already so much blood has been taken out from my child’s body and still the doctor is clueless about the diagnosis...more blood tests ..why.??? It is the same bloody blood !)

3. I examined a 2-year-old child, who had cerebral palsy and seizures secondary to perinatal insult. He was unable to sit; there was partial neck holding. I spent twenty minutes explaining to the parents about the injury to the brain, the cause of his seizures, the etiology behind his developmental delay, prognosis of the child, and answered every query related to the child’s treatment plans (including stem cell and hyperbaric oxygen which they had already tried). After the whole discussion, the uncle who was sitting very quietly throughout the consultation suddenly contributed with his inputs. “Dr. I think that you should do a X-ray spine. Look his trunk is so loose while his limbs are so tight...I am sure there is something wrong with his spine...Also because he is not eating well so there is no strength...give him good tonics...he drinks very little milk ....I believe that is the root cause of all his ailments.”

We are living in such a diversified world where on one hand people google out “pediatric neurologist” even when their child have his first febrile seizure whereas on other hand they still believe that any person with a white coat (even though now a days beauty salon employees also wear a white apron) can cure their child no matter what the ailment is.

So kudos to such a noble profession and a salute to all my pediatrician colleagues who meticulously treat the child

with their near perfect medical knowledge and convince their parents with their perfect commonsense.

*Funding:* All non-medico population whose not so medical queries keep me on toes.

*Competing interests:* There is always a conflict of interest between the two worlds which needs to be narrowed by the use of common sense.

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