

Opinion**“Hello, Jack of all Specialties”**

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I am working as an emergency physician in the UK and I want to highlight a very common misconception among masses about the specialty. It is still a new concept even for western world, as when I explain my job to friends and family, they will ask me different questions, weird questions:

“Oh, are you a GP who does emergency?”

No Lord, No! GP would not and cannot deal with emergencies.

Another common question: “Do you see all emergencies?”

Yes!

“Even kids?”

Yes.

“What about a surgical emergency?”

Yes, I deal with them!

“So, you see heart attacks?”

Oh! Hell yes!

“You also see trauma?”

Yep, I do!

Some would go ahead and say: “So you are a jack of all trades and expert of none!”

And as bad as it sounds here, it feels much worse.

Also, there are people who would go in detail of their medical/surgical/gynecological conditions and when I tell them that, they need to seek expert advice as that is not my field of expertise, they are offended. Expressions of “you are no good” can be clearly seen.

These are usually those people who have never been to the emergency department themselves or brought their loved ones with actual acute medical conditions. They have never had anyone with acute coronary heart condition or anyone with cardiac arrest who walked back home. They have not experienced the bloody picture of poly-trauma when surgeons and neurosurgeons wait for patient to stabilize so that they can take the credit of being the real heroes.

Those stabilizers are emergency physicians.

The challenges of an emergency physician as a doctor are far greater than any other field, as it is draining both mentally and emotionally. At one point, you are trying to do a lifesaving procedure, next you are breaking bad news, and very next you tell someone waiting for six long hours that you should go home and sleep and it's okay, all of this under an hour!

Along comes the social pressure, the odd working hours, emergency consultants not making as much as other consultants, and the misconception in the public of it being a useless field and within the medical community, “a referral service”.

This all adds to burn out, to a smaller number of people opting for it. Even trainees leave halfway due to some reasons

I write today as a human, who happens to be a mother of three, wife of a non-medical person, an emergency physician and a writer who loves her field of work, who is confident of her expertise but gets second thoughts at least once every week. Who would ask herself every month, at least once, is this what you want to face all your life?

The answer is yes every time, therefore it will go on, but how many more could be, should be, doing so? Only if the society accepts how important this field is, how important it is to have emergency setups, response teams, nurses, paramedics and doctors who are trained in the art and science of dealing with emergencies, how pertinent emergency medicine is in saving lives!

Only if!

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