

MEDICAL ERROR**Prof. RM Piryani****Professor of Internal Medicine & Medical Education, Chitwan Medical College, Bharatpur, Chitwan, Nepal****Email: r_piryani@hotmail.com**

It is said that 'To err is human'. Human error is omnipresent and predictable. Even if all the effective measures are taken to prevent errors, some of the errors are inevitable.^{1, 2, 3, 4} Medical error (ME) can be defined as a mistake, inadvertent occurrence, or unintended event in healthcare delivery which may, or may not, result in patient injury.⁵ The ME may related to history and physical examination, related to diagnosis (incorrect, delayed, omitted), related to therapy other than medication and procedures, medication related errors, procedure related errors, falls, nosocomial infections and others. The errors may be multi-factorial, near misses and non harmful.⁶ The ME affects the health care professionals –patient relationship and undermine patients' faith in the health care delivery system besides harming & hurting the patient. The prevention of errors is crucial but health care professionals' approach towards errors is equally important in a way that permits patients to maintain trust in health care professionals and confidence in the health care delivery system.² Health care professionals' practice guidelines and ethical guiding principles say that it is the responsibility of health care professional to report errors to healthcare delivery system and to disclose errors to patients.⁴ But in practice even in the developed countries it does not take place.^{4, 7} Hayes B conducted focus group discussion in Patan Hospital to understand Nepali staffs' attitudes to medical errors.⁷ Most staffs agreed, for good reasons of honesty and patient autonomy, that admission of errors is important, but the doctors struggled to decide how it should be done. Most agreed that the socio-legal climate in Nepal, and the possible financial implications, made it difficult to be completely honest. Other strong fears included violence from the patient, damage to the hospital's reputation and to the reputation of the doctors and possible loss of jobs for nurses.⁷ The situation seems to be more or less same in other hospitals of Nepal. It is imperative for every hospital in Nepal to have a clinical ethical committee to look after this matter. There must be appropriate hospital policy on dealing with errors. Hospital staffs need specific training in reporting and disclosing error.

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