



The pursuit of balance

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Authors

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Abstract

The field of medicine, both medical science and medical practice, has experienced a tremendous transformation during the past half century. This session explores the reasons and impacts of this transformation as seen through the lens of a surgeon who has practiced medicine for nearly 50 years.

Current research shows that throughout time, trust has remained a crucial component in patients' decisions to seek medical care, in the provision of care, and in health outcomes. This trust in medicine translates to patients' confidence that their health is the absolute and unquestioned priority of the medical professionals who treat them. Yet, this trust in medicine, and by extension the trust in the sacredness of the doctor-patient relationship, has eroded drastically during the past

5 decades. The erosion of trust has rendered our systems of medical care in a state of significant imbalance.

What factors have contributed to this imbalance? What is the impact of this imbalance on patients, on medical professionals, on the provision of care, and on health outcomes? Can balance be restored? What factors have intruded on the sacred trust between doctors and patients? How do we restore this trust given its essential role to patients' health and health outcomes?

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About the author

Ala Bashir is British of Iraqi origin. He graduated from the College of Medicine in Baghdad in 1963. Trained as plastic surgeon in England and France, he became a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons Ed. in 1971. He was the founder of Al Wasity hospital, the main center of plastic and reconstructive surgery in Baghdad. He became Professor of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery at Saddam College of Medicine (Al Nahrain). He performed the first successful re-attachment of a severed hand in the Middle East in 1983. Dr. Bashir has published 20 articles, and seven new surgical techniques. His most important achievement was the closure of extensive wounds by skin traction for the first time ever. As an artist, he has exhibited almost all over the world, including in Baghdad, Belgrade, Bonn, Cairo, Doha, Dublin, London, Moscow, New Delhi, Paris, Rabat, Rome, Tunis, Vienna, and in Baltimore-Maryland, New Haven-Connecticut, and New York City, USA. Dr. Bashir earned the Gold Medal in the 1988 Biennale International Exhibition in Baghdad and Second Prize in the 1983 International Poster Exhibition in Paris. In 2002, he earned the State Award for Medical Science, Iraq's highest medical award, and in 2003, the State Award for Fine Art, Iraq's highest art award.