

# Clinical Practice and Increasing Complexity: Current Status, Challenges and Opportunities

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Present day clinical practice has undergone a revolutionary transformation over the past decades. Today's busy clinician is faced with a gigantic task of managing complex medical issues with limited resources and time constraints, coupled with an ever increasing patient expectation and demand.<sup>1,2</sup>

Quadruple disease burden, encompassing communicable, non-communicable, mental health issues, and accidents, has increased tremendously over the years. It has increased comorbidities and complexities in patient care coupled with challenges associated with increasing healthcare costs.<sup>3</sup> In addition to dealing with biological issues, increasing social and psychological matters that require attention of an already overburdened clinician are currently whelming.<sup>4</sup> Availability of an increased number of diagnostic and therapeutic modalities puts additional pressure on busy clinician to make correct decision in the best interest of patient care.

With the inclusion of patient centeredness in clinical care,<sup>5</sup> it is expected that patient's concerns will be listened to, understood and all decisions will be made after discussion and with the approval of the patient. To meet the needs of patient centeredness, a clinician has to give more time to patient-physician consultation.

With an increasing fear of litigation,<sup>6</sup> a clinician has to ensure proper documentation of clinical care provided; since clinical care is considered not provided, if not documented. Prevention being better than cure, is the approach all practicing clinicians should follow in the best interest of patient care. This requires additional time to ensure all available preventive measures offered to the patient.

The increasing cost of health care puts additional pressure on the clinician who has to be innovative yet safe to ensure that clinical care costs are kept within the reach of the patient. Quality assurance processes are now mandatory part of clinical practice to ensure that the

clinical care is safe and of a reasonable quality.<sup>4</sup> This requires additional time commitments.

Patient expectations have increased tremendously over the recent past, coupled with more patients' comorbidities along with psychological and social issues.<sup>3,4</sup> It is extremely challenging to meet patient needs and satisfy them. Today's patients are more knowledgeable and have access to many information sources.

The main challenge for the busy clinician today is to keep up to date in a world of ever increasing medical knowledge. The clinician is expected to have good Information and Communication Technology (ICT) skills and be aware of what is happening around. A clinician is expected to utilise holistic model of clinical care which mandates having knowledge about all aspects involved in patient care.

There is a need to manage time well, and demonstrate excellent communication skills. Ability to utilise limited resources and effectively demonstrate teamwork are some ways that busy clinician can address time constraints. A busy clinician has to be flexible with ability to handle different types of patients according to need and urgency. Staging of work up with a patient and understanding on tackling various clinical issues are based on priority and needs. A busy clinician can find it useful to quickly identify and address immediate patient care issues, exclude medical emergencies with red flags, and defer on urgent issues for follow-up visit.

Clinical practice today is passing through a difficult and challenging time.<sup>7</sup> To meet ever increasing patient needs, in an environment of scarce resources, it requires innovative, high value and cost effective approaches to ensure that today's highly demanding patient needs are fulfilled and their satisfaction is ensured. This is a challenge that all future clinicians will have to face with dedication, professionalism, and hard work to ensure health of serving patients and communities.

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