



Warding Off the Evil Eye: Indicator of Worse Things to Come!

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Sir/Ma'am,

At the tertiary care burns center where I underwent my residency, we used to receive patients from all walks of life and with a wide spectrum of etiology. Yet, there is no denying that a large portion of these casualties are comprised of those from lower socioeconomic status.¹ Largely, illiteracy, poverty, and lack of safety measures remain the cause behind most accidental burns, whereas the suicidal or homicidal burns stem from deeper-rooted sociocultural evils [1, 2].

An observation which seemed interesting initially in our burn wards has now turned worrisome. We often come across knives, matchboxes, peacock feathers, and other metal sharps placed on patients' bed, beside their head. These are apparently placed to ward off the evil eye, to protect the patient from the evil. One would assume that a knife and a matchstick can hardly make things worse for these patients, but it appears to be an indicator of deep-rooted ignorance and superstition, which is heavily going to contribute as a hindrance in the very same patients' social rehabilitation [3]. It seems quite ironical that the very same child who got burnt while children around him were playing with matchsticks has a matchbox next to him (placed by the parents) during his recovery. Such is the impact of these illogical beliefs. The fact that these patients, in the protective confines of a tertiary care center, need these charms for the caretakers to be comfortable around them does raise the concern that the chances of their acceptance in their social niche are nil.

While burn prevention by trying to educate masses about fire safety is undeniably essential, it is time for us to reevaluate

our prevention strategies. Perhaps, there is a need to incorporate general social reforms in our burn prevention programs by means of education, counselling, focussing on mental health, educating and supporting underprivileged women, and protecting the fragile minds of the youth (large chunk of suicidal burns). Maybe then we will ward off the evil rather than the evil eye.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

Conflict of Interest The author declares that she has no conflicts of interest.

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