105384 - Some rulings having to do with doctors and nurses

the question

I would like to know some of the rulings having to do with doctors and nurses, especially with regard to their work and interaction with patients.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Doctors and their assistants, nurses and others, must adhere to Islamic obligations in all circumstances, and not be heedless concerning them. That includes the greatest pillar of Islam after the Shahaadatayn (twin declaration of faith), namely prayer. It is not permissible to neglect it or delay it until after the time for the prayer has ended, especially when there is work that may distract one and prevent one from praying, for the caller to evil (the Shaytaan) may put flimsy excuses and false arguments into one's mind to justify one's shortcomings. Prayer is not waived for the Muslim so long as he remains of sound mind, and it is not permissible to delay it until after the time for it has ended.

There follow some other Islamic rulings which doctors and their assistants must know:

1. It is not permissible for men and women who are working to mix freely, for the evil of mixing is immense, and it poses a grave danger to the individual and to society.

2. The women who are working in hospitals, female doctors, nurses and others, should not beautify themselves either in their clothing or with perfume, because a woman's wearing perfume and beautifying herself in front of men who are not her mahrams leads to many evils, as is well known.

3. Female workers in hospitals should not speak softly when they need to speak to men who are

not their mahrams. Moreover it is not permissible for them to talk to them except from behind a screen and without mixing. It is well known that allocating separate, women-only wings which no men enter is possible, praise be to Allah.

4. Female workers should not display their charms and they should adhere to correct shar'i hijab, by covering the entire body, including the face and hands.

5. It is haraam for male and female doctors, and their assistants, to look at 'awrahs except in the case of necessity, when there is an urgent need for that. But no one should examine a man except another man, and no one should examine a woman except another woman, unless that is not possible and it is a case of necessity, in which case there is no blame on being examined by the opposite gender, whilst adhering to the Islamic guidelines thereon. So the doctor should not look at anything except the site of the problem, and it should be in the presence of a third person whose presence will ensure that there is no khulwah (seclusion). In the case of a female patient, it is essential that her wali (guardian) be present, if possible.

6. All hospital workers must refrain from disclosing patients' secrets, and should adhere to confidentiality regarding such matters, because disclosing their secrets – in addition to being a betrayal of trust and a breach of confidentiality –leads to other evils as is well known.

7. All hospital workers must avoid imitating the disbelievers. The religious texts clearly indicate that that is prohibited. The Muslim should be proud of his religion and of belonging to it, and he should not be weak or feel inferior.

And Allah is the source of strength. May Allah send blessings and peace upon our Prophet Muhammad and upon his family and companions. End quote.

Permanent Committee for Academic Research and Ifta'

Shaykh 'And al-'Azeez ibn 'Abdillah ibn Baaz, Shaykh 'Abd al-'Azeez Aal ash-Shaykh, Shaykh 'Abdullah ibn Ghadyaan, Shaykh Saalih al-Fawzaan, Shaykh Bakr Abu Zayd

Fataawa al-Lajnah ad-Daa'imah li'l-Buhooth al-'Ilmiyyah wa'l-Ifta' (24/401).