

# Trauma' faced by some housemen in hospitals

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IN the last two years there were a couple of articles regarding the tyranny trainee doctors in our hospitals are subjected to and the unethical treatment they are accorded to by the senior medical officers (MOs) and sometimes the specialists, too.

It is also a known secret that some trainee doctors have left the profession in disgust without completing the two-year compulsory internship.

Unfortunately, up to this day nothing seems to have been done either by the Health Ministry, Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) or the Malaysian Medical Council (MMC) to fix this problem.

A houseman in any hospital in the peninsular is required to work for a minimum of 78 hours a week.

I say minimum because depending on the mood of the MO in charge, it could go much beyond this, with some end up serving even up to 90 hours a week.

Once in every week a trainee is scheduled to work continuously for 32 hours. This may be extended to 48 hours if the MO in charge so prefers.

Could you imagine how effectively a doctor can attend to patients after having gone sleepless for more than 32 hours?

And, while on duty the trainees are not given time to go for lunch or dinner; forget about tea-breaks.

Worse still, at times, they are not even allowed time to rush to the washroom to answer nature's call.

They have to "steal" time for all these, hoping that the MO in charge would not appear suddenly to check on them.

That aside, the torment these trainee doctors undergo under their overly bossy MOs, to say the least, is atrocious.

A houseman is scheduled to serve in one department for two months.

However, if the MOs or the specialist in that department do not like any of the housemen entrusted to them; then the life of that trainee would be made miserable.

The unfortunate trainee would be picked on undeservedly and reprimanded in front of the patients and visitors.

And, very often, that trainee shall be held back to spend another two months or even more in that department.

To put it in a nutshell, everything possible, including veiled threats, would be used to torment the trainee psychologically to coerce him or her to leave the profession.

I hope the ministry, MMA and MMC carry out a thorough investigation immediately in all hospitals involved in training to ensure that the housemen are treated with some decorum.

Those involved in the training of housemen should be reminded that teaching and learning cannot occur by merely humiliating and threatening the housemen.

Those MOs involved in holding back trainees for more than the stipulated two months period in any one department must be hauled-up to justify their action.

Severe action must be taken against those MOs who are found to have breached the basic ethics of humanity while dealing with their charges.

For a start, these unprofessional MOs should be relieved of responsibilities to train the housemen as they are not at all fit to be in the medical profession.

It must be remembered that the two-year period the trainees spend under senior MOs and specialists is very crucial as that is what moulds them to become good doctors.

**DISGUSTED MALAYSIAN**

**Kuala Lumpur**

Read more at <https://www.thestar.com.my/opinion/letters/2014/12/08/trauma-faced-by-some-housemen-in-hospitals/#c3UyhPylsdVxzWPX.99>