

## Emotional Quotient- A key for Professional Excellence

Radha V Taralekar<sup>1</sup><sup>1</sup>Intelehealth, Jersey city, USA

Email ID: radha.taralekar@gmail.com

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[https://www.doi.org/10.56136/BVMJ/2022\\_00014](https://www.doi.org/10.56136/BVMJ/2022_00014)**Abstract**

Despite the evidence, the Emotional Quotient (EQ) is not yet considered a significant factor in the health profession. The present short article provides a shred of evidence and the need to use EQ in the health sector and recommends involving EQ in the medical education curriculum.

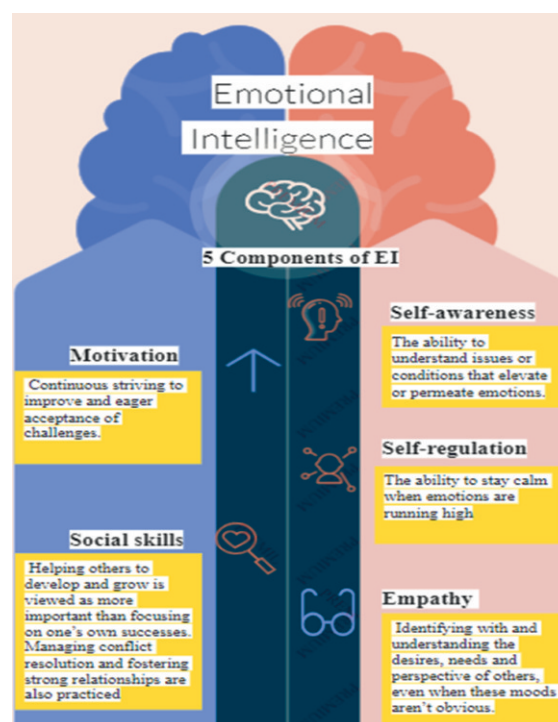
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**Background**

In India, we have noted multiple violent attacks against doctors and health care professionals in recent times. The vulnerability of the patients and their relatives lies on one side with overcrowded hospitals and overworked health care providers. While on the other side can be a few factors leading to violent episodes. Lack of Emotional Quotient among the physicians and health care professionals could also aggravate the situation and push the frustrated patients and their relatives to violence. Emotional Quotient is more crucial than Intelligence Quotient and is an indispensable tool in life. Emotional Quotient (often referred to as EQ or EI) is the ability of a person to realize and manage their own emotions and equally understand others' emotions and influence them. EQ is a human trait that profoundly affects the individual personality and professional life. So how does EQ matter to us as doctors? EQ interplays between intelligence and emotions and significantly affect how we manage our work and lives altogether. In the healthcare industry, having the necessary practical knowledge and experience is required; however, emotional intelligence is invaluable for professional excellence and effective leadership.

**What is the Emotional Quotient?**

The famous American psychologist Daniel Goleman proposed the EI framework that includes five components: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. Self-awareness is the individual's ability to understand their moods and emotions and be receptive to how their emotions can impact others. Self-regulation is the ability to control their self emotions and reactions. Motivation is the ability of an individual to deal with demanding situations and be optimistic. Empathy is an individual's ability to understand other persons' experiences<sup>(1)</sup>. Social skill is the individual's ability to establish a network and maintain a good relationship with others<sup>(2)</sup>.



**Figure 1: Diagrammatic representation of Five Components of EI**

**EQ in the health sector**

It has been proved that people with high levels of EI have a better capacity for regulating their emotions to reduce work stress<sup>(3)</sup>. Thus, it is essential to focus on the importance of EQ to meet the workplace challenges, especially now with the COVID-19 pandemic, the stress levels among the doctors have been on the rise with long working hours and isolation from family members. People with low EI struggle to understand or know to manage their own emotions, and neither know how to read others' emotions. With pandemics sweeping in, most healthcare organizations' staff face stress and burnout, thus highlighting the need to focus on EQ. A common characteristic trait found in all influential leaders is a high level of development of emotional intelligence<sup>(4)</sup>. Research has shown that EQ is an indispensable skill set for medical professional competency despite having first-class professional training, a sharp analytical mind, and various creative abilities<sup>(5)</sup>. In healthcare, for success, we as doctors must have a high EQ to help us relate with others, connect with patients to understand their needs, be aware of our own emotions, and find long-term solutions. This brings us to

ponder over the concept of EQ and how best can we improve our EQ to achieve the work-life balance.

### EQ in medical education

EQ is an ability that can be learned for effective performance at the workplace<sup>(6)</sup>. A study by M. K Swami in 2013 focuses on burnout among the medical fraternity, especially resident doctors, and proposed how enhancing EQ through training may be an important way out for targeting burnouts<sup>(7)</sup>. Multiple studies have shown that the results of a training program in emotional intelligence have indeed improved the EQ among individuals like the past studies review conducted by Kotsou et al.<sup>(8)</sup> and Hodzic et al.<sup>(9)</sup>. There is a need to impart EQ skills as part of medical education in building up sensitive physicians for the future. Currently, the medical curriculum is overloaded with subject content, and there is hardly any time allotted for skill development. There is no soft skill training for effective communication, emotional intelligence, empathy etc. in medical colleges or healthcare organizations. This leads individuals to learn these skills by observing senior colleagues and professors in action. However, active teaching-learning methods have advocated for imparting empathy, emotional intelligence, and communication skills in the medical curriculum in many countries recently. In India, the Medical Council of India's Vision 2015 document and the apex body in charge of curriculum development for medical education focused on the ATCOM module, which is the Attitude and Communication module, in order to impart education on communication skills, empathy, emotional intelligence and ethics<sup>(10)</sup>. However, implementing this curriculum in the actual teaching-learning process is yet to be initiated. Till date, there has been no documented evidence of incorporating EQ in the medical curriculum and has been only a part of management schools. Thus considering the multiple past studies reflecting the significance of EQ and its positive impact on professional life, there is an urgent need today to inculcate the virtues of EQ to learn, understand and incorporate EQ in our lives.

### Recommendation

Emotional Quotient is an inevitable tool with immense scope for individual and organizational excellence. It has been noted in a systematic review that higher EQ has been associated with the improved doctor-patient relationship, communication skills, stress management<sup>(11)</sup>. Thus in context with the current situations within the healthcare setup with high burnouts and stress, there is an urgent need to consider EQ training for the medical curriculum. Some barriers to broader implementation of EI are general lack of awareness, insufficient time and resources, and paucity of qualified faculty. Despite these barriers, we need to ensure this skill set of EQ is inculcated in future leaders. It is incorporated as a regular syllabus in medical education in India for professional prosperity, requiring a high level of policy commitment.

### Conclusion

Considering the pool of literature available on EQ and its impact on our work-life, EQ is undoubtedly a valuable skill set that cannot be ignored. There is tremendous scope for EQ to be improved through training and thus impacting

individuals to reach the heights of medical professional excellence. It will be of significant value if we consider EQ as a primary life-saving tool for professional growth that can be incorporated as a mandatory course of training for all healthcare organizations and a part of the medical syllabus for improved clinical performance and professional growth. More research, systematic review, planning, political commitments, advocacy would be required to frame and incorporate the syllabus on EQ for a healthcare organization and medical curriculum.

**Ethical considerations:** Not applicable

**Source of support:** Nil

**Conflict of interest:** Nil

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### ORCID

Radha V Taralekar  0000-0002-4265-5596

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