
Doctors should not treat themselves or their families

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It is good practice for doctors and their families to be registered with a general practitioner outside the family, who takes responsibility for their health care. This gives the doctor and family members ready access to objective advice and avoids the conflicts of interest that can arise when doctors treat themselves or those close to them.

From time to time, sad cases occur where a doctor's loss of objectivity in treating a family member results in misconduct; or where self-medication - for example, with Controlled drugs - leads to drug misuse.

It is hard to lay down an absolute rule: it makes sense for a doctor to treat minor ailments, or take emergency action where necessary.

But doctors should avoid treating themselves or close family members wherever possible. This is a matter of common sense as well as good medical practice.

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