

## Attitudes towards Informed Consent: A Comparison between Surgeons Working in Saudi Arabia and the United Kingdom

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To the Editor,

We thoroughly enjoyed reading the article by Jamjoom et al.<sup>1</sup> on "Attitudes towards Informed Consent: A Comparison between Surgeons Working in Saudi Arabia and the United Kingdom." The importance of informed consent is highly appreciated in modern medicine to preserve the patient's autonomy and avoid litigation. We think such papers are rarely discussed in medical journals and touching this topic in the way the authors presented their work should always be encouraged.

The authors stated in their introduction "*Islam in particular, has placed the preservation of human life second in rank to preservation of religion.*" This in our opinion was inappropriate and misleading. Although the authors had put a reference to their statement, we will indeed be surprised if this was not taken out of its original context. On the other hand, the statement is completely out of context in their article. For the majority, it will look as if Islam does not care for human life. Or Muslims will look into saving lives as secondary to prayers, for instance. Or indeed one might interpret it as Muslim doctors might let a non-Muslim patient die without trying to save him. The use of such statement in this medical context gives a chance of mis-interpretation by people who do not understand Islam. We would like to avoid having misconceptions about the value of human life in Islam. As a religion, Islam highly appreciates the human life. For instance, In the Holy Quran in chapter 5, verse 32:

*"And if anyone saves a life, it would be as if he saved the life of all mankind"*

Chapter 2, verse 195:

*"And spend [freely] in God's cause, and let not your own hands throw you into destruction; and persevere in doing good; behold, God loves the doers of good"*

And in chapter 17, verse 70:

*"Now, indeed, We have conferred dignity on the children of Adam, and borne them over land and sea, and provided for them sustenance out of the good things of life, and favored them far above most of Our creation"*

All these statements show the importance of human life preservation in Islam. We think the authors, should take in consideration the implications of quoting such statement in medical context as Islam gives great priority for human life. More appropriate statement would've been "*Islam in particular, has placed the preservation of human life as a top priority and safeguarded it.*"

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