

Medical ethics and etiquette

Introduction to basic principles

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Etiquette

- **Defined as:**
 - The customs or rules governing behaviour regarded as correct in social or official life
 - I. A conventional but unwritten code of practice followed by certain members of any certain profession or groups
 - II. The code of ethical behaviour regarding professional practice or action among members of a profession in their dealings with each other and their clients

• Thus examples would include:

- ✓ Conduct in public
- ✓ Manner of dressing
- ✓ Conduct towards patients/clients
- ✓ Conduct towards seniors and teachers
- ✓ Conduct towards other workers
- ✓ Conduct towards colleagues

Ethics are not ...

- **Ethics is not the same as feelings**
- **Ethics is not religion**
- **Ethics is not following the law**
- **Ethics is not following culturally accepted norms**
- **Ethics is not science**

Ethics are ...

- Moral Principles
- What is good and bad
- What is right and wrong
- Based on value system
- Ethical norms are not universal – depends on the sub culture of the society

ethics refers to standards of behavior that tell us how human beings ought to act in the many situations in which they find themselves

as friends, parents, children, citizens, businesspeople, teachers, professionals, and so on.

Historically

- **medical ethics may be traced to guidelines on the duty of physicians such as the Hippocratic oath**

a physician must recognize responsibility to patients first and foremost, as well as to society, to other health professionals, and to self. These are not laws, but standards of conduct which define the essentials of honorable behavior for the physician

Four basic Principles of Medical Ethics

- **Autonomy**
- **Beneficence**
- **Non maleficence**
- **Justice**

Autonomy

Patient has freedom of thought, intention and action when making decisions regarding health care procedures

For a patient to make a fully informed decision, she/he must understand all risks and benefits of the procedure and the likelihood of success.

Beneficence

The practitioner should act in “the best interest” of the patient - the procedure be provided with the intent of doing good to the patient

Non maleficence

• **“Above all, do no harm,” – Make sure that the procedure does not harm the patient or others in society**

Justice

- The distribution of scarce health resources, and the decision of who gets what treatment “fairness and equality”
- The burdens and benefits of new or experimental treatments must be distributed equally among all groups in society

Medical malpractice

An act or omission by a health care provider that deviates from accepted standards of practice in the medical community which causes injury to the patient.