

Code of Ethics for the Health Care Practitioners

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Objectives



Describe what is medical ethics



Define moral ethics versus personal ethics



Describe professional ethics



Ethical dilemmas case studies



Roxy



Roxy

- 28-year-old exotic dancer diagnosed with abdominal aortic aneurysm
- Big Time Emergency! Time is of the essence
- Surgical intervention is needed with a 50/50 survival rate
- She worries scar will negatively impact her work
- She refuses surgery
- MD does surgery without consent
- She sues



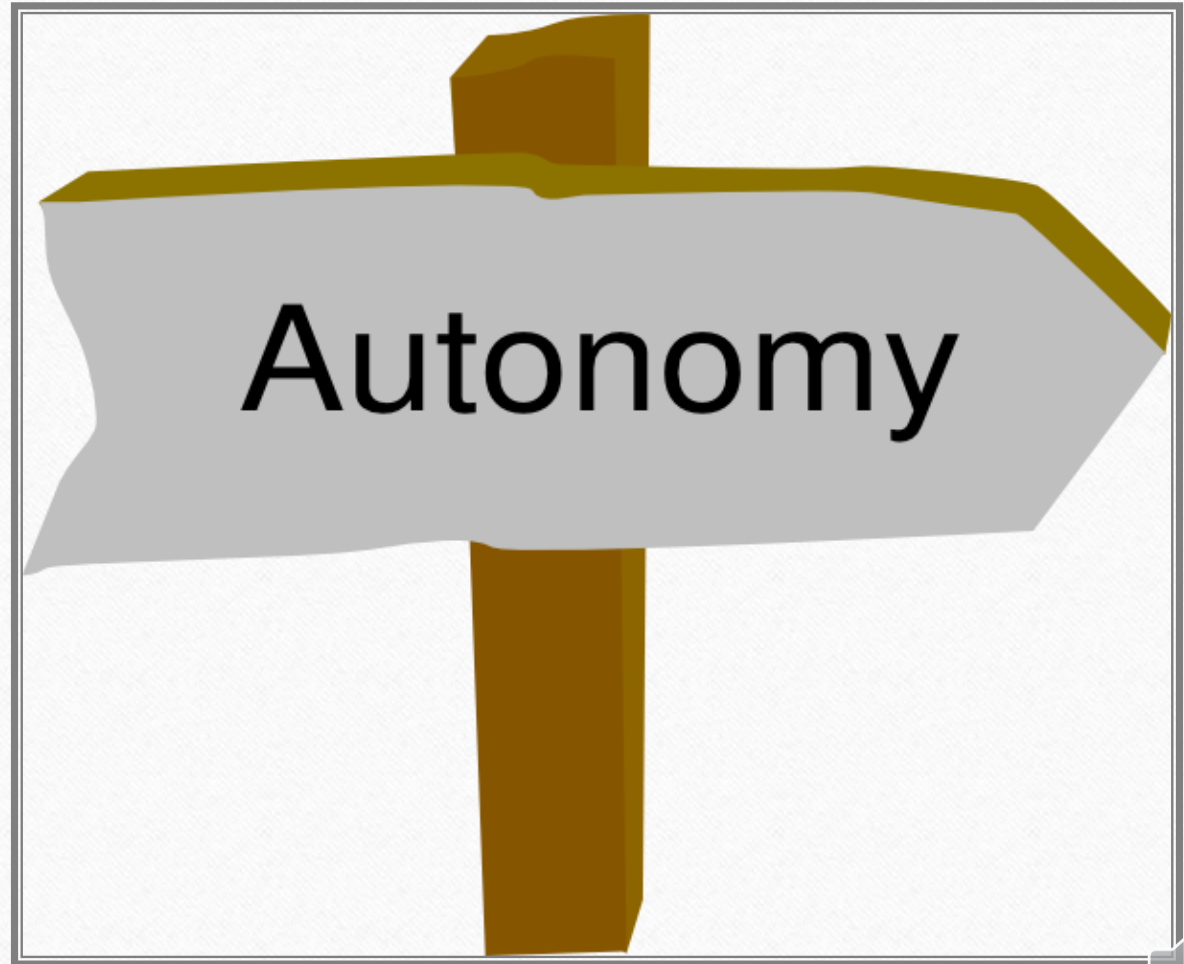
Questions

- Do you believe that the physician's actions can be justified in any way?
- Is there anything else that they could have done?
- Is it ever right to take away someone's autonomy?
- What would you do?



Autonomy

- Autonomy essentially means "self rule" and it's the patient's most basic right
- It is a health care worker's responsibility to respect the autonomy of patients
- It can conflict with the paternalistic attitude of many health care professionals



Case 2- Gary



Gary

- 12-year-old child who complains of flu like symptoms when seen in your ED
- The health care practitioner notices the child bruises
- Father says he fell on bicycle
- Child appears anxious and withdrawn
- Poor eye contact



Gary- What should you do?

- Take care of Gary's flu like symptoms only?
- Ask father to step out so you can speak to child alone?
- Ask Gary if he fell from bike in front of the dad?
- Report this incident to the authorities?
- What other choices are there?



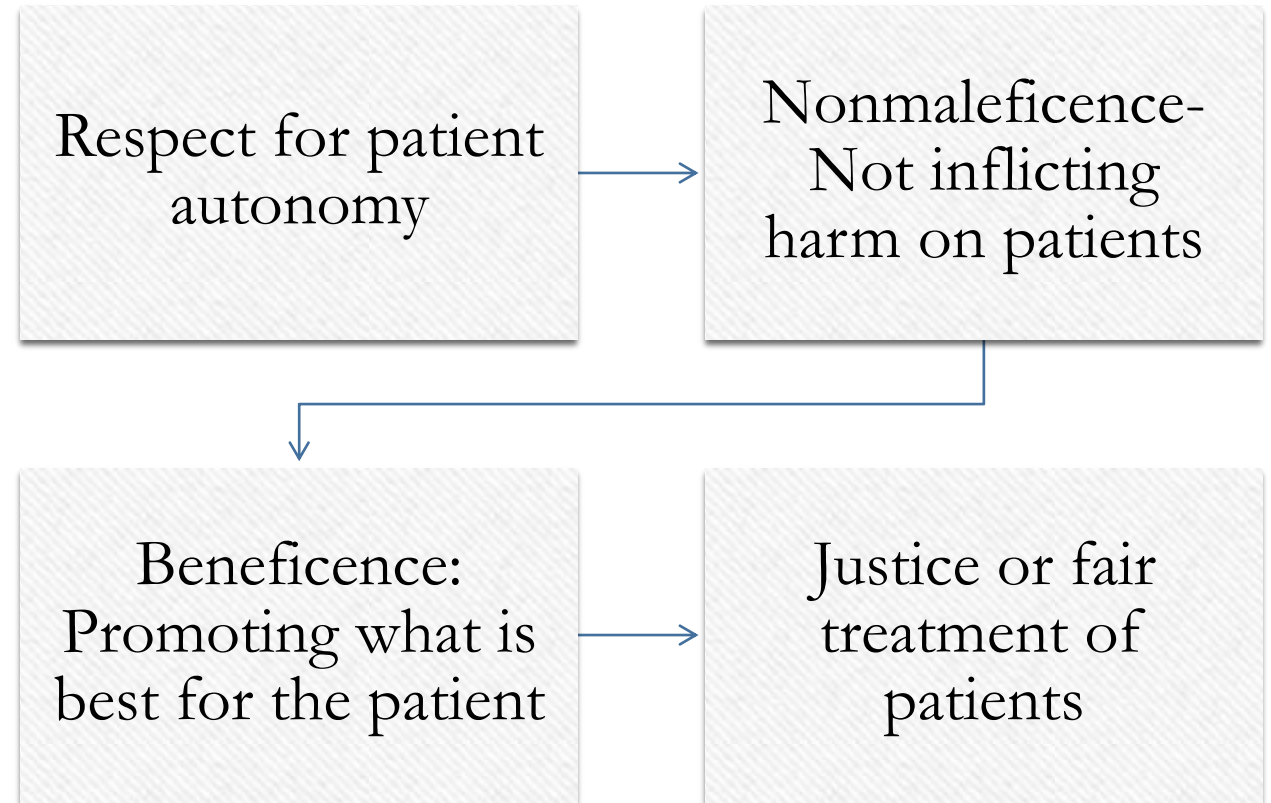


What is Medical Ethics?

- “Professional Ethics” and “Medical Ethics” were coined by Thomas Percival in the 17th century.
- System of moral principles that apply values and judgments
- It is how health care practitioners make ethical choices
- Consist of moral and ethical principles which is good for individuals and society



Principles of Medical Ethics



What are some top ethical issues in healthcare?

- Patients' rights
- Equity of resources
- Confidentiality of patients
- Conflict of interest
- Informed consent
- What would you do if your patient refused treatment for a life-threatening condition?
- What would you do if you witnessed a colleague making a mistake with a patient's treatment? .



Medical ethics

- Guides professional and ethical conduct of health care professionals
- Consideration of others (patient choices)
- Same moral principles and rules that we do in ordinary circumstances
- Just doing what is right!





Ethics VS. Morals

Difference between Morals and Ethics

- These terms are often used interchangeably to refer to what is considered right or wrong. But they are not the same.
- Morals refers to generally accepted customs or practices that are based on common societal values and beliefs
- Ethics focuses on deliberation and explicit arguments to justify why actions are right or wrong



Ethics Dilemmas

Ethics covers the following dilemmas:

- Avoiding a paternalistic attitude
- Putting the patient's interests their first
- Protect their privacy and dignity
- Encourage them to become involved in medical decision as far as their abilities will allow



Why is Medical Ethics Important?

- Resolves conflicts of interests between:
 - Government agencies and medical institutions
 - Medical institutions and medical personnel
 - Physicians and patients are getting more and more serious and complex



Code of Behavior as a Health Care Professional

- Involves: 3 aspects
 - Personal values
 - Professional standards expected of a healthcare professional
 - Organizational standards expected of an employee



We are required to know right from wrong

- Ethical choices arise all the time
- Ability to determine inappropriate behavior
- Commitment to do what is right
- Should we expect our “team” to do the right thing too??
- Disruptive behavior



Professional Medical Ethics

- Standards of conduct that apply to a medical professional (AARC)
- Society trusts them to provide valuable goods and services with no biases
- Healthcare professionals must conform to certain standards of their profession
 - Refuse to do illegal or unethical acts
 - Seek educational opportunities
 - Respect privacy of patients





Professional Ethics in Medicine

Code of ethics is specific to each profession

1. Principles of Ethics

- Standards for exemplary professional behavior

2. Rules of Ethics

- Mandatory, direct standards of minimally acceptable professional conduct often set by the state



Personal Ethics (Everyone is different)



- **Personal values**
 - Dependable
 - Honest
 - Responsible
 - Trustworthy
 - Promote no harm



Organizational Ethics

- The integration of clinical and business ethics has produced what is known as “organizational ethics”
- A fundamental difference between organizational ethics and traditional health care ethics is scope: traditional ethics focuses on individuals and organizational ethics on collectives
- Ethical decisions via institutional boards or committees and individuals acting as agents of those organizations



Organizational Ethics

- Governed by
 - Legislation/laws
 - Professional codes
 - Individual values
- Never compromise your ability to perform in the best interest of the organization
- Think IRB



Recognize Illegal and Unethical Behavior

- It is your report any event that has adverse affects on the health, safety or welfare of any person within the healthcare agency
- Healthcare professional must
 - Obey the law
 - Follow code of ethics for his/her job description
 - Treat everyone with respect



Healthcare professionals' ethical obligations

Report Illegal and Unethical Behavior

- Ensures health, safety and welfare of any person within the healthcare agency
 - Follow employee handbook for reporting procedures
 - Consult manager/supervisor
 - Contact human resources supervisor



What is the difference between Morals and Ethics??



Ethics and Morality-What are they?

The *basis* for ethics must be morals, not the other way around



Ethics and Morality-What are they?

- Ethics and morals both relate to “right” and “wrong” conduct.
- Ethics refer to the series of rules provided to an individual by an external source. e.g. their profession.
- On the other hand, morals refer to an individual’s own principles regarding right and wrong typically from social rules in the home setting
 - Moms rules!



Comparison of Ethics versus Morals

Ethics

- It defines how things are according to the rules for society.

Moral

- It defines how things should work according to an individuals' ideals and principles.



Comparison of Ethics versus Morals

Ethics

- Social system – External
- **Why we do it?**
- Because society says it is the right thing to do.
- **What if we don't do it?**
- We may face peer/societal disapproval, or even be fired from our job.

Moral

- Individual – internal
- **Why we do it ?**
- Because we believe in something being right or wrong.
- **What if we don't do it?**
- Doing something against one's morals and principles can have different effects on different people, they may feel uncomfortable, and /or remorse



Resolving Ethical Dilemmas

- Listen carefully
- Do not jump to conclusions
- Gather more information relevant to the case situation
- Consider your own bias and assumptions
- Explore reasonable options of compromise
- Involve carers and friends trusted by patient as appropriate
- Seek support



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