

BAU's Medical Ethics Curriculum

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Medical Ethics Course

- Medical Ethics is taught as a one credit course during the third semester.
- Professors act as role models all through the years especially when it comes to medical and communication ethics.

Medical Ethics Course

- This course is based on The World Medical Association's Medical Ethics Manual and The Lebanese Medical Ethics Law amongst others.
- *This presentation doesn't cover all the items covered by the course.*

OUTLINE

- ◉ Introduction
- ◉ Physicians' values
- ◉ How do individuals decide what is ethical?
- ◉ Physicians and patients
- ◉ Patients' rights

- ◉ Physicians' rights
- ◉ Physicians and society
- ◉ Physicians and colleagues
- ◉ Medical research
- ◉ Responsibilities to oneself
- ◉ Ethical issues

INTRODUCTION

- When people think of medicine, they think of science and technical miracles, but it is a deeply moral enterprise.
- Medical ethics is primarily a field of applied ethics, the study of moral values and judgments as they apply to medicine.

- Questions of value, of good and bad, right and wrong, pervade the practice of medicine.
- The focus of clinicians' training should not fall exclusively on the technical side, but also on the long-neglected ethical dimension.

PHYSICIANS' VALUES

- Compassion, competence and autonomy along with respect for fundamental human rights, serve as the foundation of medical ethics.

How Do Individuals Decide What Is Ethical?

- The study of ethics prepares medical students to recognize difficult situations and to deal with them in a rational and principled manner.

- The ethical directives of medical associations are general in nature; they cannot deal with every situation that physicians might face in their medical practice.

- Physicians are ultimately responsible for making their own ethical decisions and for implementing them.
- The ways of approaching ethical issues can be divided roughly into two categories: ***non-rational*** and ***rational***.

Non-rational approaches:

- ◎ **Obedience:** Morality in following the rules or instructions of those in authority
- ◎ **Imitation:** Morality in following the example of the role model

Non-rational approaches:

- ◉ **Feeling** or **desire** is a subjective approach to moral decision making and behavior. The measure of morality is to be found within each individual.

Non-rational approaches:

- ◎ **Intuition** is an immediate perception of the right way to act in a situation. Its location is in the mind rather than the will. It is neither systematic nor reflexive but directs moral decisions through a simple flash of insight.

Non-rational approaches:

- ◎ **Habit** is a very efficient method of moral decision-making. There is no need to repeat a systematic decision-making process each time a moral issue arises.

Rational approaches:

- ◉ **Deontology** involves a search for well-founded rules that can serve as the basis for making moral decisions.
- ◉ **Consequentialism** bases ethical decision-making on an analysis of the likely consequences or outcomes of different choices and actions.

Rational approaches:

- ◉ **Principlism** uses ethical principles as the basis for making moral decisions; taking into account both rules and consequences.
- ◉ **Virtue ethics** focuses less on decision-making and more on the character of decision-makers as reflected in their behavior. A virtue is a type of moral excellence.

Decision Making Process

- To ensure that the behavior of the decision-maker both in coming to a decision and in implementing is admirable, the following steps may be followed:
 - 1. Determine if the issue at hand is an ethical one.**

2. Consult authoritative sources such as medical association codes of ethics and policies, and respected colleagues to see how physicians generally deal with such issues.

3. Consider alternative solutions in light of the principles and values they uphold and their likely consequences.

4. **Discuss the proposed solution** with those whom it will affect.
5. **Make the decision and act on it**, with sensitivity to others affected.
6. **Evaluate the decision** and be prepared to act differently in future.

Physicians and Patients

- The physician-patient relationship is the cornerstone of medical practice and therefore of medical ethics.
- Ethical principles such as respect for persons, informed consent and confidentiality are basic to the physician-patient relationship.

PATIENTS' RIGHTS

- ◉ Receive treatment without discrimination as to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, sexual orientation or source of payment.
- ◉ Receive considerate and respectful care in a clean and safe environment free of unnecessary restraints.

- ◉ Receive emergency care.
- ◉ Receive complete information about the diagnosis, treatment and prognosis.
- ◉ Receive all the information needed to give informed consent for any proposed procedure or treatment.

- ◉ Receive all the information needed to give informed consent for an order not to resuscitate.
- ◉ Designate an individual to give this consent for him/her if he/she is too ill to do so.
- ◉ Refuse treatment and be told what effect this may have on his/her health.

- ◉ Refuse to take part in research.
- ◉ Privacy while in the hospital and confidentiality of all information and records regarding his/her care.
- ◉ Participate in all decisions about his/her treatment and discharge from the hospital.

- Make the wishes known in regard to anatomical gifts.
- Document the wishes on a donor card.

Physician's Rights

- There should be no barriers which will prevent physicians from attending medical meetings, wherever such meetings are convened.
- Physicians must have the professional freedom to care for their patients without interference and physicians must have the professional freedom to represent and defend the health needs of patients.

- Any judgment on a doctor's professional conduct or performance must incorporate evaluation by the doctor's professional peers.
- Medical associations are ought to support and protect physicians who are resisting involvement inhuman procedures or who are working to treat and rehabilitate victims, as well as the right to uphold the highest ethical principles including medical confidentiality.

Ethical Guidelines for The International Recruitment of Physicians:

- Every country is ought to do its utmost to retain its physicians in the profession.
- Provide the physicians with the support they need to meet their personal and professional goals, taking into account the country's needs and resources.

Ethical Guidelines for The International Recruitment of Physicians:

- Ensure that physicians who are working, either permanently or temporarily, in a country other than their home country be treated fairly in relation to other physicians in that country.

Physicians and Society

- This relationship can be characterized as a 'social contract'.
- Society grants the profession privileges, including exclusive or primary responsibility for the provision of certain services and a high degree of self-regulation, and in return, the profession agrees to use these privileges primarily for the benefit of others and only secondarily for its own benefit.

- Physicians have significant roles to play in public health, health education, environmental protection, laws affecting the health or well-being of the community, and testimony at judicial proceedings.

Global Health

- The failure to recognize and treat highly contagious diseases by a physician in one country can have devastating effects on patients in other countries.

Physicians and Colleagues

- Teachers have an obligation to treat their students respectfully and to serve as good role models in dealing with patients.
- The so-called 'hidden curriculum' of medical education, i.e., the standards of behavior exhibited by practicing physicians, is much more influential than the explicit curriculum of medical ethics.

- Medical students are expected to exhibit high standards of ethical behavior as appropriate for future physicians.

Medical Research

- ◎ **Approval:** Every proposal for medical research on human subjects must be reviewed and approved by an independent ethics committee before it can proceed.

- ◉ **Scientific Merit:** Medical research involving human subjects must be justifiable on scientific grounds.
- ◉ **Social Value:** Social value has emerged as an important criterion for judging whether a project should be funded.

- ◉ **Risks and Benefits:** If the risk is entirely unknown, then the researcher should not proceed with the project until some reliable data are available.
- ◉ **Informed Consent:** The voluntary consent of the human subject is absolutely essential.

- ◉ **Confidentiality:** Research subjects have a right to privacy with regard to their personal health information.
- ◉ **Conflict of Roles:** The physician's role must take precedence over the researcher even if he is the same person.

◎ **Honest Reporting of Results**

◎ **Whistle-blowing**

Responsibilities to Oneself

- Physicians often forget that they have responsibilities to themselves, and to their families, as well.

Ethical Issues

- ◉ Beginning of life
- ◉ End of life
- ◉ Organ donation

THANK YOU