

Why have a Lecture series on Medical Ethics?

Jeff Kaufhold MD FACP HEC-C

Oct 2024

Miami University PA Program

Scope of the Problem.

- despite the development of standards, milestones, and competencies related to professionalism, there is no consensus about the specific goals of medical ethics education, the essential knowledge
- and skills expected of learners, the best pedagogical methods and processes for implementation, and optimal strategies for assessment.

Professionalism and the Romanell Report 2015

- Romanell Report, is a product of the Project to Rebalance and Integrate Medical Education (PRIME), funded by the Patrick and Edna Romanell Fund for Bioethics Pedagogy. PRIME was a national working group that focused on medical ethics and humanities education as they relate to professionalism education in medical school and residency training. These recommendations apply to Nurse Practitioners and Physician Assistants as well.
- One Develops medical professionalism by
 - (1) becoming scientifically and clinically competent;
 - (2) using clinical knowledge and skills primarily for the protection and promotion of the patient's health-related interests, keeping self-interest systematically secondary;
 - and (3) sustaining medicine as a public trust

Working definition of Medical Ethics

- Clinical ethics concerns both the ethical features that are present in every clinical encounter and the ethical problems that occasionally occur in those encounters.”
- In addition, we consider medical ethics to include attention to determining what ought to be done when problems or values conflicts are present: that is, determining the right course of action or a morally acceptable choice from among the available options.

Professional competencies

- Has professional and respectful interactions with patients, caregivers, and members of the interprofessional team (e.g. peers, consultants, nursing, ancillary professionals and support personnel). (PROF1)
- maintains patient privacy and respects patient autonomy
- Accepts responsibility and follows through on tasks.
- Role models prioritizing multiple competing demands in order to complete tasks and responsibilities in a timely and effective manner
- Assists others to improve their ability to prioritize multiple, competing tasks
- Responds to each patient's unique characteristics and needs.
- Exhibits integrity and ethical behavior in professional conduct

Proposed Objectives for Medical Ethics Education - Principles

- *Upon completion of a training program, learners will, with an appropriate level of proficiency:*
- Demonstrate an understanding of the concept of the physician/ Physician Assistant as fiduciary and the historical development of medicine as a profession
- Recognize ethical issues that may arise in the course of patient care
- Utilize relevant ethics statements from professional associations to guide clinical ethical judgment and decision making
- Think critically and systematically through ethical problems using bioethical principles and other tools of ethical analysis
- Provide a reasoned account of professionally responsible management of ethical problems and act in accordance with those judgments
- Articulate ethical reasoning to others coherently and respectfully

Upon completion of training program, learners will, with an appropriate level of proficiency, manage ethical challenges in a professional manner in the following areas

- Protection of patient privacy and confidentiality
- Disclosure of information to patients, including medical errors and the delivery of bad news
- Assessment of patient decision-making capacity and issues related to surrogate decision making
- Shared decision making, including informed consent and informed refusal of medical interventions by patients
- Care at the end of life, including patient advance directives, withholding and withdrawing life-sustaining interventions, care for the dying, and determination of death
- Maternal–fetal medicine, including reproductive technologies and termination of pregnancy
- Pediatric and neonatal medicine
- Access to health care, including health care disparities, the health care system, and the allocation of scarce resources
- Cross-cultural communication, including cultural competency and humility

Upon completion of training program, learners will, with an appropriate level of proficiency, manage ethical challenges in a professional manner in the following areas

- Role of the health care professional's personal values in the clinical encounter, including the extent and limits of the right of conscience
- Conflicts of interest and of obligation in education, clinical practice, and research
- Research with human subjects, including institutional review boards
- Work within the medical team, including interprofessional interactions
- Concerns about colleagues, including impairment, incompetence, and mistakes
- Medical trainee issues, including disclosure of student status, the tension between education and best care for patients, the hidden curriculum, and moral distress
- Self-awareness, including professional identity and self-care
- Management of challenging patients/family members, including recognition of what the clinician may be contributing to the difficulty
- Social media

Objectives of Medical Ethics Education: Practical matters

- The ability to identify the moral aspects of medical practice
- The ability to obtain a valid consent or a valid refusal of treatment
- Knowledge of how to proceed if a patient is only partially competent or incompetent to consent or to refuse treatment
- Knowledge of how to proceed if a patient refuses treatment
- The ability to decide when it is morally justified to withhold information from a patient
- The ability to decide when it is morally justified to breach confidentiality
- Knowledge of the moral aspects of the care of patients with a poor prognosis, including patients who are terminally ill

Assessment of Medical Ethics Education

- *Items to assess in Medical Learners*
- Mastery of a basic body of medical ethics content
- Mastery of the intellectual skills for ethical analysis and reasoning/argument
- Performance in core bioethics behavioral skills:
 - obtaining meaningful informed consent or informed refusal,
 - assessing decision-making capacity,
 - breaking bad news,
 - analyzing a case with ethics issues,
 - and using a shared decision-making approach with patients