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Evaluation of Medical Professional Ethics

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Mutual trust and relationships between doctors and patients are important factors in the treatment plan. Changing trends in the medical field do affect this relationship. Every profession has guidelines, rules and regulations guiding its practice, this is what ethics is all about. The issues in medical ethics often involve life and death. Serious health issues are raised over the rights of patients, informed consent, confidentiality, competence, advance directives, negligence, and many others. Ethics is a concept in the field of philosophy. Ethics is not static, and applicable at all times. What was considered good ethics a hundred years ago may not be considered so today.

The word ethics is derived from the Greek word 'Ethnos' which means character, customs and habits. It is closely linked to the word 'moral' which is derived from the Latin word 'Mos' (mores), but they are different. Both ethics and morals generally mean customs and socially accepted norms. Ethics guide various professions in carrying out their duties while morals have to do with the way of life. Ethics is concerned with the concept of right and wrong. Medical ethics is concerned with the obligations of the doctors and the hospital to the patient along with other health professionals and society.

Medical ethics is a branch of ethics concerned with the principles and values that guide medical decision-making and the delivery of healthcare. It is essential for healthcare providers to uphold ethical principles to ensure that they are providing care that is in the best interests of their patients while also being respectful of their autonomy and dignity. Here are some of the key ethical principles in the medical profession, along with references:

1. Respect for patient autonomy: Patients have the right to make decisions about their own healthcare and to be informed about their treatment options. This principle is based on the idea of informed consent and is enshrined in various ethical codes, including the World Medical Association's Declaration of Helsinki (1).

2. Non-maleficence: Healthcare providers have a duty to do no harm to their patients. This principle is reflected in the Hippocratic Oath, which includes the promise to "first, do no harm" (2).

3. Beneficence: Healthcare providers have a duty to act in the best interests of their patients and to provide care that promotes their well-being. This principle is also reflected in the Hippocratic Oath, which includes the promise to "do good" (2).

4. Justice: Healthcare resources should be allocated fairly and equitably, and patients should be treated with respect and without discrimination. This principle is reflected in various ethical codes, including the American Medical Association's Code of Medical Ethics (3).

5. Confidentiality: Healthcare providers have a duty to maintain patient confidentiality and protect patient privacy. This principle is reflected in various ethical codes, including the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) in the United States (4).

Overall, medical ethics is a critical aspect of the medical profession, ensuring that healthcare providers provide care that is in the best interests of their patients and upholds fundamental principles of justice and respect for autonomy and dignity.

Various national laws and regulations, as well as international ethical codes such as the World Medical Association's Declaration of Geneva and the Declaration of Helsinki, govern medical ethics in Bangladesh. Bangladesh has also adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which recognises the right to health and access to healthcare services.

One of the key ethical challenges in Bangladesh is the provision of healthcare to a large population with limited resources. Healthcare providers may face difficult decisions about how to allocate resources and prioritize care, which can raise ethical questions about justice and fairness.

Another important ethical issue in Bangladesh is the need for informed consent. Patients have the right to make informed decisions about their healthcare, but in some cases, they may need access to sufficient information or may face pressure from family members or others. Informed consent is especially important in cases involving vulnerable populations, such as children or those with limited literacy or understanding of medical procedures.

In addition, confidentiality and privacy are important ethical considerations in Bangladesh, as patients may fear discrimination or stigma related to their health conditions. Healthcare providers have a responsibility to protect patient confidentiality and respect their privacy, while also providing appropriate care and treatment.

Overall, medical ethics in Bangladesh reflect the broader ethical principles of respect for patient autonomy, non-maleficence, beneficence, justice, and confidentiality. The Bangladesh Medical and Dental Council (BMDC) is responsible for ensuring that healthcare providers adhere to ethical standards, and has established a code of ethics for medical professionals in Bangladesh (5).

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