

ETHICS IN MENTAL HEALTH: FROM HIPPOCRATES TO THE WPA DECLARATION ON ETHICS

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Introduction

Traditional medical practice is threatened by two real or potential developments:

1. Over-specialisation

as a by-product of the increase in the quantity of knowledge

2. De-humanisation of medical practice

as a by-product of hyperbolic faith and dependence on technological achievements

Medical Education

Should offer knowledge, but also:

- skills
- attitudes
- ethics
- models

Desired qualities and functions of a physician

1. Be *holistically* minded
2. Be *open* minded
3. Be both *leader* and *follower*
4. Be at *peace* with self



Desired qualities and functions of a physician

5. Serve Πανάκεια and Ιασώ but also Υγεία

6. *Co-operate* with other medical and allied professionals

7. Find *time* to spend with patients

8. Help younger colleagues (e.g. *education*)



Desired qualities and functions of a physician

9. Update his/her knowledge, skills and attitudes (continuous medical education)

10. Accept his/her social role

- education of public
- health promotion
- lessening of borderline attitudes

Desired qualities and functions of a physician

11. Become familiar with modern technology
12. Be aware of the needs of the community for early diagnosis and treatment
13. Practice according to recognised ethical principles (*codes of ethics*)

Edinburgh Declaration (1988)

- Medical education should aim at production of doctors who will promote the health of *all* people
- Educational settings should be enlarged to include *community* settings - not hospital alone
- Curriculum content must reflect *national health priorities*

Edinburgh Declaration (1988)

- Continuity of learning *throughout life*
- Shift of emphasis from passive learning to *active learning*
- Emphasis not only on retention and recall of information but also on *professional competence and social values*

Edinburgh Declaration (1988)

- Emphasis on *health promotion* and *prevention*
- Selection methods for medical students based not only on intellectual ability and academic achievement, but also on *personal qualities*

Codes of Ethics : Hippocratic Ethics

Hippocratic ethical concepts are described in eight chapters of *Corpus Hippocraticum*:

- The Oath
- Ancient medicine
- The physician
- The law
- Precepts
- Airs - waters – places
- Medical Decorum
- Aphorisms

Codes of Ethics : Hippocratic Ethics

Ancient Greek medicine was based on the coexistence of :

- **Asclepian medicine** – practiced by priests in the asclepieia and based on the interpretation of dreams, catharsis and religious faith
- **Hippocratic medicine** – rational medicine

Hippocrates taught that *rationalism* and *humanities* go hand in hand and that humanistic values are as important as clinical training

Codes of Ethics : Hippocratic Ethics

The first line of the Hippocratic Oath is revealing:

“ I swear by Apollo the Physician, by Asclepios, by Hygeia and Panacea and by all the Gods and Goddesses, making them my witnesses, that I will carry out according to my ability and judgement, this oath and this indenture”

Codes of Ethics: Hippocratic Ethics

Ethics deal with right and wrong in human behaviour.

Medical ethics deal with right and wrong in the behaviour of physicians during their professional lives.

Medicine without ethics is potentially dangerous.

The Physician must benefit and do no harm to the patient

Hippocrates

Codes of Ethics: The Hippocratic Oath

Four Parts:

1. Invocation
2. Duties to profession and teachers
3. Duties to patients
4. Consequences in case of failure to honour the Oath

Codes of Ethics : The Hippocratic Oath

Demands:

- Responsibility towards:
 - Patients
 - Teachers
 - Teachers' offspring
- Ethical conduct
- Confidentiality
- Awareness of limitations

Codes of Ethics : The Hippocratic Oath

Is opposed to:

- Euthanasia
- Sexual relations with patients
- Abortion

Codes of Ethics: Hippocratic Environmental Ethics

Emphasis on the importance of environmental factors in human health
(*Hippocrates “Airs, Waters, Places”*)

“The dominant factor is Nature” (Decorum)

“All excess is hostile to Nature” (Aphorisms)

Codes of Ethics: Hippocratic Teaching

The basic ideas of Hippocratic Ethics continue to be the cornerstone of professional behaviour and the nucleus of subsequent ethical codes:

- *Declaration of Geneva (1948, amended 1968)*
- *Nuremberg Code (1947)*
- *Declaration of Helsinki (1964 – revised 2000)*
- *Declaration of Madrid (1996)*

*“ Where there is love for man
there is also love for the art of Medicine ”*

Hippocrates (“Precepts”)

Codes of Ethics :
Declaration of Geneva
(WMA 1948, amended 1968)

- Respect for human life
- Gratitude to teachers
- Avoidance of discriminations

Codes of Ethics : Principles of Medical Ethics

(AMA 1980)

- Responsibility to patients
- Responsibility to society
- Exposure of incompetent colleagues

Codes of Ethics :
Declaration of Helsinki
(WMA 1964, revised 1975)

- Bio-medical research
- Experimentation
- Compliance essential for acceptance of publications

Codes of Ethics : Physician's Oath of the Soviet Union *(Meditsinskaya Gazeta 1971)*

- Emphasis on both cure and prevention
- Turn to colleagues for advice
- Actions guided by “communist morality”
- Responsibility to people and Soviet state

Codes of Ethics : Specifically for Psychiatry

- Declaration of Hawaii (*WPA 1977*)
- Declaration of Madrid (*WPA 1996*)

Declaration of Hawaii

- Societal duties
- Continuous education (for health care providers, patients and the public)
- Turn to colleagues if needed
- Existence of central appeal body in cases of compulsory medical acts
- Avoidance of psychiatric treatment in the absence of psychiatric illness

Declaration of Madrid

- Best treatment available
- Least freedom-restrictive interventions
- Advice from experts

Declaration of Madrid

- Equitable allocation of health resources
- Familiarity with scientific developments
- Free and informed decisions
- Legal rights and human dignity

Declaration of Madrid

- No treatment against patients' will (unless there is danger to life)
- Informed consent of patient concerning findings of psychiatric assessment
- Confidentiality

Breach only when the patient or a third person are in danger

Declaration of Madrid

Research must be:

- approved by ethics committee
- in keeping with scientific rules
- conducted by trained individuals
- respectful of the patient's autonomy and integrity

Currently, all 130 societies of the WPA have adopted the declaration of Madrid. Abiding by the declaration is a prerequisite for new applications

Guidelines concerning specific situations

(WPA Ethics Committee, Madrid 1996)

- Euthanasia

A physician's duty is the protection of life.

The decisions of the patient may be distorted by mental illness.

- Torture

No participation under any circumstances.

- Death penalty

No participation in assessment of competency for executions.

Guidelines concerning specific situations

(WPA Ethics Committee, Madrid 1996)

- Selection of sex

No participation in decisions to terminate pregnancy for reasons of sex selection.

- Organ transplantation

Ensure informed decisions and self-determination.

Guidelines concerning specific situations

(WPA Ethics Committee, Hamburg 1999)

- **Psychiatrists addressing the media**
 - No pronouncements on presumed psychopathology
 - Represent the profession with dignity
 - Presentation of research findings with awareness of their possible impact.
- **Ethnicity and culture**
 - No discrimination
- **Genetic Research and Counseling**
 - Awareness of the impact of genetic information
 - Genetic counseling respectful of the patients' value system.

Guidelines Concerning specific situations

(WPA Ethics Committee, Cairo 2005)

- **Protection of the Rights of Psychiatrists**
- Protection of the right of Psychiatrists to live up to the obligations of their profession
- Protection of the right of Psychiatrists to practice at the highest level of excellence
- Protection of the right of Psychiatrists not be abused by
 - totalitarian political regimes
 - profit-driven economical systems

Guidelines Concerning specific situations

(WPA Ethics Committee, Cairo 2005)

- **Protection of the Rights of Psychiatrists**
- Protection of the right of Psychiatrists not to become
Victims of discriminatory practices because of the stigma they share with patients

Outcast by the profession, ridiculed in the media or persecuted because of advocacy for the medical needs and the social and political rights of their patients

Guidelines Concerning specific situations

(WPA Ethics Committee, Cairo 2005)

- **Disclosing the Diagnosis of Alzheimer's Disease**
 - A patient has the right to know or not to know
 - Disclosure of diagnosis to the patient has many benefits
 - Patients and / or families should be told the diagnosis as early as possible
 - Exceptions to the disclosure of diagnosis in cases of
 - severe dementia
 - phobia
 - severe depression

Guidelines Concerning specific situations

(WPA Ethics Committee, Cairo 2005)

- **Dual Responsibilities of Psychiatrists**
- Obligation to disclose to the person being assessed the nature of the assessment (non-therapeutic and potentially damaging to the interests of that person).
- Need to advocate for limits to disclosure of information other than what is absolutely essential

Codes of Ethics

Common factor in all codes

The highest ethical priority is
the well-being of the patient

Contribution of the Psychiatrist

The psychiatrist may:

- play a significant role in averting dehumanisation of medical practice
- protect the patient's rights, advocate for the patient, highlight the therapeutic potential of interpersonal relationships

Ethics and Human Rights

- Observing professional **Ethical Rules**
is a guarantee for
Human Rights

Lack of illness is not equal to health.
The εὐ εἶναι (well being, happiness)
is also required.

