

What is mean of ethics ?

Ethics are the moral principles or virtues that govern the character and conduct of individual or a group

Ethics, as a branch of both philosophy and theology, it mean what is right and good with respect to character and conduct.

Ethics answer two questions:

1. What should we do?
2. Why should we do it?

The object of ethics is to emphasize spirit (or intent) rather than law.

Dental ethics applies moral principles and virtues to the practice of dentistry

Why are ethics important ?

Ethics affect every decision made in a dental office, activities of both judging and choosing.

Ethics affect relationships with patients, the public, office staff, and other professionals. As a dentist, you have to make numerous decisions. Some decisions are straightforward and easy; others can be very difficult

When ethics are ignored, you risk making unethical or less ethical decisions. Unethical decisions can lead to unethical conduct. At a minimum, unethical conduct effect on your service to patients and your ability to function as a professional

What is a “profession”?

A profession defined as an occupation involving a long and specialized preparation on the level of higher education and governed by a special code of ethics.

The aim of a profession is the public good. Dentistry is recognized as a profession.

What is a “professional”?

A professional is a member of a profession. **Four qualities** was attributed to those who practice a profession:

1. A professional has respect for human حقوق الانسان beings;
2. A professional is competent; كفاءة
3. A professional has integrity; النزاهة
4. A professional’s primary goal is service, not prestige or profit.

What is “professionalism”?

Professionalism mean quality of conduct and character by the use of superior knowledge, skill, and judgment, to the benefit of another, prior to any consideration of self-interest

Do we really have obligations to patients?

By agreeing to take part in the dentist-patient relationship, both patients and dentists accept certain obligations or duties. The dentist is obligated to respect patient privacy, maintain patient confidences, keep promises ,and be truthful in treatment decisions.

The principles of practice in dentistry :

As a dental professional ,, you are responsible for doing the following :

1. Putting patients' interests first and acting to protect them
2. Respecting patients' dignity and choices
3. Protecting the confidentiality of patients' information
4. Cooperating with other member of dental team and other healthcare colleagues in the interests of patients
5. Maintaining your professional knowledge and competence
6. Being trustworthy

Putting patients' interests first and acting to protect them

- 1) Put patients 'interests before your own or those of any colleague, organization or business.
- 2) Work within your knowledge ,professional competence and physical abilities.
- 3) Refer patients for a second opinion and for another advice when it is necessary ,or if the patient asks.
- 4) Refer patients for further treatment when it is necessary to do so.
- 5) Make and keep accurate and complete patient records ,including a medical history ,at the time you treat them.
- 6) Make sure that patients have easy access to their records

Respecting patients' dignity and choices

- 1) Treat patients politely and with respect ,in recognition of their dignity and rights as individuals.
- 2) Recognize and promote patients 'responsibility for making decisions about their bodies ,their priorities and their care ,making sure you do not take any steps without patients 'consent (permission)
- 3) Maintain appropriate boundaries in the relationships you have with patients .Do not abuse those relationships.
- 4) Listen to patients and give them the information they need, in a way they can use ,so that they can make decisions.
- 5) This will include:
 - a) communicating effectively with patients
 - b) explaining options (including risks and benefits
 - c) giving full information on proposed treatment and possible costs.

Protecting the confidentiality of patients' information

- 1) Treat information about patients as confidential and use it for the purposes for which it is given
- 2) Prevent information for accidentally being revealed and prevent authorized access by keeping information secure all times

Cooperating with other member of dental team and other healthcare colleagues in the interests of patients

- 1) Cooperate with other team members and colleagues and respect their role in caring for patients
- 2) Treat all team members and other colleagues fairly and in line with law
- 3) Don't discriminate against them
- 4) Communicate effectively and share your knowledge and skills with other team members as necessary in the interest of patients

Maintaining your professional knowledge and competence

- 1) Recognise that your qualification for registration was the first stage in your professional education.
- 3) Develop and update your knowledge and skills throughout your working life.

Being trustworthy

1. Justify the trust that your patients, the public and your colleagues have in you by always acting honestly and fairly.
2. Maintain appropriate standards of personal behaviour in all walks of life so that patients have confidence in you and the public have confidence in the dental profession.

What is mean the “best interests” of our patients?

The “best interests” of our patients means that professional decisions by the dentist must consider patients’ values and personal preferences. This requires that dentists carefully communicate with their patients, and listening is importance. Sometimes patient desires conflict with professional recommendations. Patients must be informed of possible complications, alternative treatments, advantages and disadvantages of each, costs of each, and expected outcomes.

What is “paternalism?”

Paternalism act as a father (or parent), it can involve a dentist overriding the autonomous decision of a competent patient for that patient’s own benefit. It is the dentist’s responsibility to determine the decision-making of each patient with the help of alternative ways. The patient’s values may conflict with the dentist’s recommendations, and these conflicts may lead to paternalistic decisions. For example, the dentist may decide to withhold information from patient in order to unduly influence the patient. The dentist must consider the patient’s values and personal preferences, and the dentist must involve the patient in the decision-making process if the patient is considered capable. For patients with compromised capacity, the dentist has an ethical obligation to inform responsible results about treatment choices, costs, possible complications, and expected outcomes..

What about compromising quality?

There are times when a dentist may face the decision to compromise quality. This may be because of the limited financial resources of the patient, reimbursement restrictions imposed by dental insurance plans, patient values or preferences, or other factors. Compromise must not occur simply because the dentist is willing to “cut corners.” These limitations or restrictions may divert the direction of the overall case from “ideal,” but they should never affect the quality of the separate components comprising the final treatment plan.. For example, if the final decision, is to place a less costly type of restoration instead of a more durable or esthetic (but more expensive) restoration, then the dentist is obligated to place the less costly restoration competently. The dentist is also obligated to collaborate with the patient during the decision-making process.

Is good risk management good ethics?

Good risk management is not necessarily good ethics. Risk management decision processes often differ from decision processes based on ethical principles. Risk management decisions are typically made from the dentist’s or institution’s perspective—and for their benefit. Decision processes based on ethical principles always consider the patient’s best interests, as well as the patient’s values and preferences. Risk management processes and decisions that do not include the perspective of the patient may be unethical

What's Special about Dentistry?

In every part of the world, being a dentist has meant something special. People come to dentists for help with some of their most pressing needs – relief from pain and suffering and restoration of oral health and well-being. They allow dentists to see, touch and manipulate their bodies and they disclose information about themselves that they would not want others to know. They do this because they trust their dentists to act in their best interests.

Human rights and law

In recent times both medical ethics and dental ethics have influenced by developments in **human rights**. In a pluralistic and multicultural world, with many different moral traditions, the major international human rights agreements can provide a foundation for dental ethics that is acceptable across national and cultural boundaries. dentists sometimes have to deal with dental problems resulting from violations of human rights, such as forced migration and torture. They are greatly affected by the debate over health care is a human right, since the answer to this question in any country determines to a large extent who has access to dental care.

Dental ethics is also closely related to **law**. In most countries there are laws that deal with how dentists are required to deal with ethical issues in patient care and research. In addition, the dental licensing and regulatory officials in each country can and do punish dentists for ethical violations. Usually the requirements of dental ethics and law are similar. But ethics should not be confused with law. One difference between the

two is that laws can differ from one country to another while ethics is generally applicable across national boundaries.

Dating patients

Dentists should not use their position of influence to develop romantic relationships with patients. Romantic interests with current patients may exploit patients' vulnerability and detrimentally affect the objective judgment of the clinician. In such a case, the dentist should consider terminating the dentist-patient relationship in an arrangement mutually agreeable to the patient. Dentists should avoid creating perceptions of inappropriate behavior .

Disclosure and misrepresentation

Dentists should represent themselves to the public and their peers. The dentist has an obligation to represent professional qualifications without overstatement of facts that do not exist. A dentist has an obligation to avoid shaping the conclusions or perceptions of patients or other professionals by withholding or altering information that is needed for accurate assessment. The dentist has an obligation to disclose commercial relationships with companies when recommending products of those companies. The dentist may ethically have ties to commercial entities, but the dentist should fully disclose such relationships to patients and professional colleagues when nondisclosure would lead to differing conclusions, perceptions, or misrepresentation. Incomplete disclosure and misrepresentation may also adversely affect dental research and journalism. In the course of evaluating research and dental literature, dentists are cautioned that such problems may exist and can lead to incorrect assumptions and conclusions. It is important that dentists critically evaluate dental research, literature, and advertising claims

Emergency care

A dentist should be available, within reason, to address acute dental conditions. A person with an emergent dental condition should be examined and either treated or referred for treatment. In such situations, the patient's health and comfort must be the dentist's primary concern, not compensation or convenience. If a dentist

cannot accommodate the patient's emergent needs, a reasonable effort should be made to have the patient seen in a timely manner by someone capable of treating the condition.

Financial arrangements

The issue of financial arrangements includes the subject of fees and communication of payment options. Fees should be consistent and fair to all parties. Many dentists provide *pro bono* care for patients with special conditions, including financial hardship. Dentists should not vary fees based on the patient's financial resources, including insurance plans. In non-emergency situations fees and payment options should be disclosed to patients and agreed upon prior to any services being performed. Financial arrangements for treatment are part of informed consent/refusal discussions.

Harassment

The dentist must avoid conditions or actions that promote harassment or abuse of staff, patients, or other related parties. Sexual harassment may be the most familiar form, but harassment may also be physical, verbal, or psychological in nature. Sexual advances, sexually explicit or offensive language, sexually offensive materials, inappropriate physical contact, and actions of a related nature are indefensible and must be avoided. The dentist must be aware of signs of harassment and must strive to eliminate it from the workplace. Dentists must be careful not to misuse their inherent positional power. Harassment may also exist between parties not involving the dentist. The dentist must take appropriate corrective action when conditions favoring harassment exist or when harassment is recognized. Patients and staff are to be treated with respect. The dentist must be aware of laws and regulations that govern harassment

informed consent and refusal

Ethical concerns regarding the process of informed consent and refusal extend beyond the level required for compliance with the law. The ethical consideration imposes:

1. Comprehensive knowledge on the part of the practitioner;
2. Uncompromising veracity;

3. Unbiased presentation of all reasonable alternatives and consequences, including costs and the probability of outcomes;
4. The ability of the practitioner to communicate clearly on a level assuring comprehension by the patient or appropriate authority;
5. Reasonable assurance by the dentist that the patient is competent and has sufficient understanding to render a decision.

Both the severity of a harmful result and the likelihood of its occurrence should be considered when deciding which information to include in informed consent discussions. The dentist must be aware of applicable laws, regulations, and standards regarding the nature, scope, and depth of informed consent and refusal discussions

Managed care

Managed care is a market mechanism for distributing oral health resources; participation in managed care is usually for economic advantage to the involved parties. managed care is neither good nor bad. However, there are several principles that protect against ethical risk:

1. Ethical and professional aspects of dentistry always take precedence over economic ones;
2. The dentist must not unduly influence patients or limit the information necessary for patients to make informed decisions;
3. The standard of care should be the same for all patients regardless of the means of reimbursement;
4. The dentist should not utilize the services of under-qualified individuals in order to profit from a lower standard of care;
5. Instances of gross or continual faulty treatment by other dentists should be reported to appropriate reviewing agencies;
6. The dentist should fully explore and understand all terms and implications of contractual arrangements before committing to them.

Obligation to treat patients

The dentist is not obligated to diagnose or treat everyone. However, the dentist must avoid actions that could be interpreted as discriminatory; the dentist must be aware of laws and regulations that govern discrimination. A patient in pain or at health risk from an acute dental condition should be accepted for discussion of the condition, examined if indicated, then either treated or appropriately referred. Refraining from treatment There are several valid reasons for a dentist to refrain from providing treatment:

1. The dentist does not have the expertise or capability to provide competent treatment or to meet patient expectations. In such cases, the dentist has a responsibility to refer patients to suitable caregivers who can provide treatment appropriate to the circumstances;
2. The dentist's professional ability is impaired from injury, illness, disability, medication, or addiction;
3. The patient requests treatment that is clearly contrary to the patient's best interests