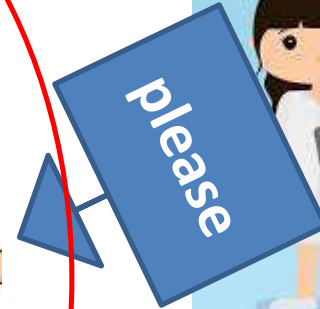


Ethical responsibilities of physicians

Duties of physicians:

1. Define the doctor's duties towards self, colleagues, patients (and families), the profession, and the community in general.
2. Describe the relationships that the doctor has with others during the providing of health care.
3. Appreciate the significance of maintaining professional relationships with colleagues in achieving the best health care.



Who is the FOCUS of healthcare?



Doctors Are NOT the focus of the healthcare

Case (ethical scenario)

On his round, the well-known surgeon Mr. Butcher was always keen to have all the residents and interns on his unit in attendance, in addition to other health care team members (dietician, physiotherapist, nurses, and others) to whom he always referred as the “paramedics.” During the round, he asked one of his unit's female interns to examine a 65-year-old male patient who had had his prostate removed two days before. He asked her in a loud voice. Both the intern and the patient felt embarrassed. The surgeon stopped her when she tried to pull the curtains, as there were few other patients next to this patient who would see him being examined if the curtains were not pulled. He said, “Nothing to be ashamed of. He is a patient in a teaching hospital so he expects that you will all examine him,” then, “isn't that right Mr. X?” talking to the patient. The intern asked the patient's permission then examined him, and the operation site. The surgeon then asked her and the other “doctors” some questions. As usual in his round, the wrong answers were ridiculed, and the “paramedics” were never given a chance to answer. “Paramedics are to take the instructions doctors give them,” he would always say.



Hospital

- Healer
- Manager
- Researcher



Medical colleague

- Educator
- Researcher
- Manager



Ministry of health

- Healer
- Manager
- Planner
- Researcher



Community

- Healer
- Health educator
- Manger
- Researcher

Duties of the physician toward him/herself

- **“... The physician should be modest, virtuous and merciful... He should wear clean clothes, be dignified, and have well-groomed hair and beard. He should select his company to be persons of good reputation. He should be careful of what he says and should not hesitate to ask forgiveness if he has made an error...**

**Al-Tabari, 970 A.D., Fardous Al
Hikma**

1. Duties of the physician towards the profession

1-To respect the dignity of his profession:

- By being **honest, correct** and **accurate** in his work and he **has not to join any job** beside medicine except **teaching and governmental professions** .
- **Develop him/herself to develop the profession:** Attend continuous medical education (CME) activities, conduct research, and publish results
- He should not use his name for **trading medications** or for commercial purposes.
- He has not to **use agents** to get more patients.
- He should **not sell** any medical samples.
- Provide a role model for his colleagues and patients



(continued)



- 2- He should be honest, accurate and correct in writing any medical report or certificate.**
- 3- He should be reasonable in his financial relation with patients according to the fees put by the medical syndicate**
- 4- A physician is advised to use great caution in divulging (announcing) discoveries or new techniques of treatment. He has to use the scientific procedures and should follow the normal legal channels to advertise the results of his medical research. The research should be accepted by a respectable medical periodical journal and accepted by the authorities**



(continued)

5-His clinic should be fulfilled certain criteria

- **Good aeration and illumination**
- **Reasonable furniture**
- **Good equipment**
- **Good medical records and filling system**



(continued)

6-Advertising himself and his clinic should be gained out of his good reputation between his patients and colleagues and his scientific knowledge and skills. He has not to use non-ethical methods like agents.

Advertising through media has rules (in newspapers for 2 weeks in the following situations):

- On opening his clinic
- On changing the address
- On changing the time- table or schedule
- On leaving the town for more than a month



(continued)

- *The label on the clinic should be of a reasonable size without decoration and including the exact qualification and post of the physician. Any addition e.g. unreal specialty mentioned in it is considered forgery by law.*

"Dr. Surgeon, MD, FRCS"

الاستاذ الدكتور ع ا
دكتورة في الطب
علاج الصداع في ثوان
افضل جراح علي مستوي الشرق
الاطوسط

- *The practitioner must be careful not to do effort to attract patient to himself, such by giving **interviews to the lay press** or by **writing articles** on medical subjects for the lay press. However it may be quite legal to publish articles or deliver lecture on topics of general medical interest.*

Duties of physicians towards the community.

Duty	Good (professional) example (What to do)	Bad (unprofessional) example (What not to do)
Positive interaction with the community's affairs	Volunteer for an NGO in case of disaster	"It's the government's work, why should I care?"
Protect the community by reporting reportable/epidemic diseases	Familiarize yourself with the reporting system and forms	"I won't report. Someone else will. It'll cause me a headache later."
Improve health in the community through advocacy and health education, and involvement in community health activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prepare advocacy material• Give a public talk about a health issue	An NGO invited you to their camp for a disaster. "How much will you compensate me for my time?"
Rational use of the health care institution's resources	Use hi-tech expensive investigations only when needed	Request MRI or CT scan for every patient. "The machines are already there. It could be something serious anyway."

Duties of physicians towards the community.

Duty	Good (professional) example (What to do	Bad (unprofessional) example (What not to do)
Effective contribution to the development of policies that respond to community needs and facilitate easier access to health care	? Respond to quality control questionnaires ? Join committees of interest	Doing what everybody else does, and constantly complaining about the failure of the system
Be an ideal example in his attitude and religion	Make sure there is another qualified person looking after your patient while you go to pray	“Why should I care? No one would dare to blame me. I was praying.”

Duties of physicians towards the community.

Duty	Good (professional) example (What to do)	Bad (unprofessional) example (What not to do)
Promotion of health justice among the society's members	Your patient is? Discuss lifestyle options and refer them to other departments, as needed	Writing a prescription without giving any more advice.
Use your skills, knowledge, and expertise to improve the standards of health services rendered to the society	Have an idea to improve the work? Do it if you can, or share it with your colleagues and department	“Who cares? The whole situation is hopeless. Let me keep my ideas to myself.”

4. Duties of physicians towards colleagues: (physician – physician relationship).



Physician should not:

- 1) **Criticize** the treatment of his colleague.
- 2) Trying to replace another colleague in the **treatment of a patient.**
- 3) **Refusing** to attend and treat a fellow colleague or any of his relatives to whom he is responsible.
- 5) **Accept any fees** for the treatment of fellow colleague of any or his relatives to whom he is responsible.

Duties of the physician towards his colleagues.

5-There should be good cooperation and respect between the colleagues.

6-He has not to open a clinic in the same building with a physician of the same specialty except after taking permission of the medical syndicate and the physician himself.



(continued)



7-He has not to compete with physicians by increasing or decreasing the fees than the range accepted by the medical syndicate.

8-He should not take fees when examining and treating a physician or his family or medical students.

9-When replacing a physician in his clinic, he must not entice **جذب** (=take) patients from his colleagues .



Duties towards his colleagues.

Duty	Good (professional) example (What to do)	Bad (unprofessional) example (What not to do)
To deal with, and act towards his/her colleagues in a good manner and in the same way he/she would prefer to be treated	Acknowledge them, praise them, and thank them	“Who does she think she is? She has to stop showing up in the round answering all the questions.”
To avoid direct criticism to his/her colleague in front of patients	“I think I know another way to do this examination.”	“What do you think you're doing? This examination is completely wrong.”
Not to indulge in defaming the honor of his/her colleagues	A patient was referred to you from another doctor. You don't agree with his/her diagnosis/treatment. Tell the patient that there are different ways of investigating and treating his case, and then call the first doctor to discuss.	☒ A doctor tells his patient, “How on earth did such an ignorant doctor give you such treatment? You are lucky you didn't continue with him.”

Duty	Good (professional) example (What to do)	Bad (unprofessional) example (What not to do)
To exert every possible effort to educate colleagues	Read an interesting article? Bought an important book? Share it with them	Hiding the important notes or questions that your senior colleagues gave you
Respect the differences among colleagues (gender, culture, belief...)	Your colleague is from a peripheral part of the country; tell him “It's amazing that you could have gained all these	Telling jokes about your colleague's nationality or tribe in front of everyone

Duty	Good (professional) example (What to do)	Bad (unprofessional) example (What not to do)
<p>The physician should respect other nonphysician medical professional colleagues, and appreciate their roles in the health care of the patient</p>	<p>You learned something from a nurse or midwife? “Thanks. I’m so grateful you showed me that.”</p>	<p>A doctor says to a midwife, “This is a doctor’s job. Please give way!”</p>
<p>He/she must report incidents in which a colleague’s actions would be dangerous could be dangerous to the authority concerned</p>	<p>Your surgery consultant made a mistake during surgery; write it down in the surgery sheet.</p>	<p>“Why should I cause myself trouble? Nobody was hurt anyway.</p>

3. Duties of physicians toward patient: (physician-patient relationship).



Physician should:

- Owe his patients **complete loyalty** and all the resources of his science.
- **Request another physician** who has the necessary ability. **يستدعى**
- Observe **absolute confidentiality** even after the patient has died.
- Provide the patient with **information** necessary to explain why physician recommendation ought to be followed.

The patient is

Obligated to participate and cooperate in the treatment and to follow reasonable instructions for further evaluation and treatment.

Duties of the physician towards the patients

- 1- He should be in good and kind relation with the patients.***
- 2- He has to do his utmost for caring of his patient. He should respect the patient's life, trying always to protect not to harm it and to reduce the patients pains.***
- 3- The physician must support the dignity of all persons without differentiation between them (social, economic, financial, religious and personal factors)***

(continued)

4-Continuous medical education is essential and he should use recent technology which will help in diagnosis and treatment.

5-If he is unable for any reason to give the considerable care to the patient, he should ask for consultation of one of his colleagues.

6-He has not to reveal the patient's secrets.

7-If the patient or his family ask for consultation of another physician he should obey their wish.



Duties of the physician towards the patients (continued)

8- A doctor cannot be forced to treat any person, but having once accepted the case he must continue to treat him until other assistance can be obtained.



(continued)



9-On consultation :

- ***If the patient is coming to his clinic while he was treated by another physician, there is no obligations to consult the previous one.***
- ***If he is asked to visit a patient that has been treated by another physician, he should ask the patient to consult this physician except when the patient refuses.***
- ***He has to obey the wish of the patient and his family if they ask for another opinion.***
- ***If there is any disagreement, he may leave the other physician to continue treatment of the case***

Termination of the physician- patient relationship:

- (1) Completion of the treatment by **patient recovery**.
- (2) The patient **may unilaterally** terminate the relationship for any reason and at any time.
- (3) Patient's care has completely **transferred to another physician**.

Abandonment:

- "the unilateral severance of the professional relationship without reasonable notice at a time when there is still the necessity of continuing medical attention".
- Abandonment of a patient may result in civil liability for the physician.

How Can a Physician Properly Terminate the Physician-Patient Relationship?

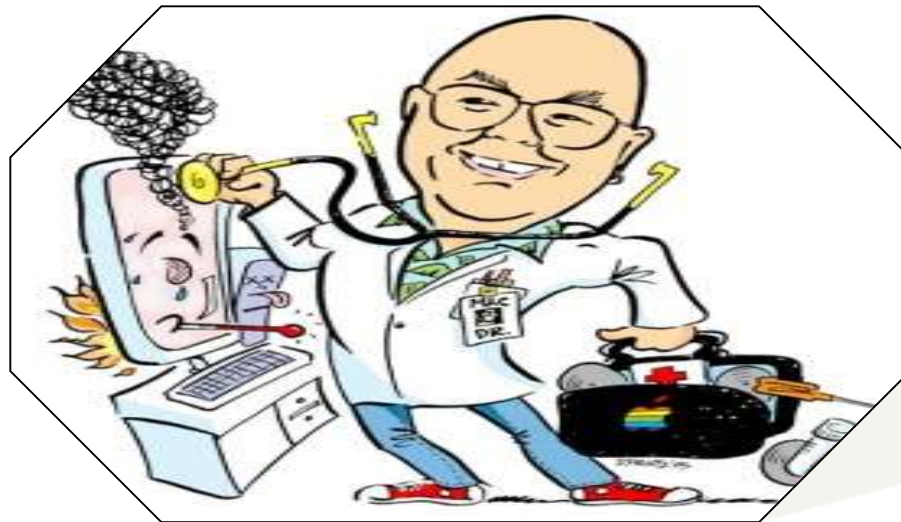
For a patient who is actively treating for a condition, a physician must:

- give the patient proper notice that the physician is terminating the physician-patient relationship, and
- give the patient sufficient time to find another physician before finally refusing to treat the patient any further.

What Must a Patient Prove in a Malpractice Case?

- **The patient must show the following:**
 - the patient needed continuing medical treatment
 - the physician stopped treating the patient
 - the physician did not give the patient enough time to find another doctor before the physician stopped his/her treatment of the patient
 - as a result of the physician's abandonment of the patient, the patient's condition was made worse

Case- studies



CASE STUDY

- **Dr. C, a newly appointed anesthetist in a city hospital, is alarmed by the behavior of the senior surgeon in the operating room. The surgeon uses out-of-date techniques that prolong operations and result in greater post-operative pain and longer recovery times. Moreover, he makes frequent crude jokes about the patients that obviously bother the assisting nurses. As a more junior staff member, Dr. C is reluctant to criticize the surgeon personally or to report him to higher authorities. However, he feels that he must do something to improve the situation.**
- **Does Dr. C, have the right to be worry about the behavior of the senior surgeon in the operating room and to criticize him and why?**
- **Does Dr. C, have the right to do something?**
- **If yes, what he should do?**

- Dr. C is right to be worried by the behavior of the senior surgeon in the operating room. Not only is he endangering the health of the patient but he is being disrespectful to both the patient and his colleagues. Dr. C has an ethical duty not to ignore this behavior but to do something about it.
 - **As a first step, he should not indicate any support for the offensive behavior, for example, by laughing at the jokes.**
 - **If he thinks that discussing the matter with the surgeon might be effective, he should go ahead and do this.**
 - **Otherwise, he may have to go directly to higher authorities in the hospital. If they are unwilling to deal with the situation, then he can approach the appropriate physician licensing body and ask it to investigate.**

Thank you

