

Dental Ethics

Ethical Law and ethical Theories

Lec. 9&10

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History and basic ethical theory

Ethics is the branch of philosophy that examines right and wrong moral behavior, moral concepts (such as justice, virtue, duty) and moral language. Ethics or moral philosophy is a branch of philosophy that "involves systematizing, defending, and recommending concepts of right and wrong behavior".

Various ethical theories pose various answers to the question "What is the greatest good?" and elaborate a complete set of proper behaviors for individuals and groups

In modern dentistry, like other branches of medicine, a set of principles contribute in establishing codes of ethics. These codes which are based on ethical principles, religious beliefs and the social and cultural considerations guide the dental practitioners in their everyday practice and also establish expectations for dentists in fulfilling their ethical and professional duties to the patients, public and the profession itself.

History of medical ethics:

1- Hammurabi's code of law (1790 BC): Hammurabi's was the ruler of Babylon in his codes of law he regulated the fees of physician, for successful treatment the physician was paid in proportion to the patient wealth, but if an operation was fatal, the physician hands were cut off. If the lost patient was a slave the physician had to the master a replacement

2- Hippocratic oath: Medical ethics' footprints could be found in all schools of classic medicine. The Hippocratic Oath is one of the oldest binding documents in history. Written in antiquity, its principles are held sacred by doctors to this day. Several parts of the oath have been removed or re-shaped over the years in various countries, schools, and societies as the social, religious, and political importance of medicine has changed.

Regulation of professional standards to the Greek physician Hippocrate (4th centuryBC), he wrote the oldest code in medical ethics. Hippocrate Oath. The Oath was a convent between the physician and his teacher which set an ideal by which he promised to practice. Which starts (I swear by Apollo the physician....to bring the following Oath to fulfillment

- Respect
- Professional Integrity
- Competency
- Confidentially
- Abortion
- Euthanasia

3- In Geneva 1947 the world medical association was founded,
& in that establishment the laws restated in a modern style, was known as
The Geneva declaration.

Basic grounding of Ethics:

1- Cultural relativism: For judgment to be considered moral; it must simply meet with the approval of one's cultural standards. Different cultures differ & hence different judgments.

2- Personal relativism: A behavior or character is considered good or right when it is in line with one's personal standard.

3- Professional codes: Profession by its very nature creates its own ethical standards; profession is the single, universal source of ethics for itself. Historically, professions have generated their own codes of ethics and have been responsible for resolving of disputes.

4- Humanities (universal standards) Religious& nonreligious: for the religious group, every behavior or character should be based on concept of (God), or (Allah). For the nonreligious group, it is based on universal standards as: reasoning, human nature, intuition.

5- Political& dogmatic strategies of the state: that is to say what certain authorities wants to do for the public.

Other groundings of Ethics (theories of ethics):

Ethics also built on or base on logical reasoning as to what makes actions, policies, rules, or character traits right and wrong, good or bad. It does not take into account the origin, justification and standard of reference.

Three general kinds of judgments:

1- Which kinds or rules are right or wrong or bad (Action theory)

2- Which non moral things are good or bad (value theory)

3- What results from such conducts (consequential theory)?

1- Action theory:

Action theory describes action as behavior caused by an agent in a particular situation. The agent's desires and beliefs lead to bodily behavior. This theory is based on principles that tend to make action Right or wrong,

Beneficence – doing good,

Non maleficence – avoiding harm,

Veracity – truth telling,

Fidelity –faithfulness, including keeping promises,

Respect for autonomy,

Avoidance of killing,

Justice – fair ness and equality... ..From these principles ethics have to make an accurate dental decision making.

2- Consequentiality theory: which is the reality... what happened consequently. Or the

Consequences of one's conduct are the ultimate basis for any judgments, the mission of acting.as in English saying (the end justifies the meanings)

3- Value theory (why theory): encompasses a range of approaches to understand how? Why? and to what degree values are?? Whether the object or subject of valuing is a person, idea, object, or anything else. an account

what is considered good or harm depending on subjective choices, others are more objective. For example: pleasure is good/bad”; “it would be good/bad if you did that”; “it is good/bad for him to talk to her”; “too much cholesterol is good/bad for your health”

(A man is truly ethical only when he obeys the compulsion to help all life which he is able to assist, and shrinks from injuring anything that lives.')

Ethics and the law

- Ethics, whether in its wide sense or its professional application, conforms to laws in general.
- When conflicts **اضتير** do arise, the choice between being legal and being ethical can be difficult. It is often argued **جتبىالذ** ethicists that ETHICS and not law, establishes the ultimate standards for evaluating conduct.
- Certain practices may be legal but un-ethical. For example, it is not illegal for a medical professional to smoke in front of his patients, but it is certainly not ethical for obvious reasons.

Ethics versus Law

Ethical restrictions greater than legal restrictions.

Ethics of different professions are promoted by professionals committees, unions, associations, organizations. However, they are not always imposed by the law.

It is possible that a dentist's attempt to act ethically could be in conflict with the law.

When ethics and law seem to be in conflict, one should consider seeking advice from persons who have responsibility in such matters before taking action that violates legal standards.

Actions that violate legal standards may lead to serious consequences