

Ethics applied to medical students: Challenges for a new generation of health professionals



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ABSTRACT

The Code of Ethics of the Medical Student is a fundamental tool to guide the ethical conduct of future physicians from the beginning of their training. This article discusses the importance of this code in the development of medical professionals committed to sound ethical principles and respect for the values of the profession. The code of ethics provides comprehensive guidelines for medical students, addressing areas such as integrity, respect for the patient, confidentiality,

social and scientific responsibility, and relationship with other health professionals. In addition to establishing behavioral standards, the code also emphasizes the importance of self-reflection and continuous ethical improvement. Adherence to the code of ethics contributes to the training of compassionate and ethical physicians, who not only possess advanced medical knowledge, but also understand the moral responsibility inherent in the profession. By internalizing these values from their formative years, medical students are more likely to act with empathy, honesty, and respect when caring for their patients. In addition, the medical student's code of ethics promotes a culture of ethics and responsibility, positively impacting the environment of medical teaching and practice. Applying these principles not only benefits patients, but also strengthens trust in the medical profession as a whole. In conclusion, the Code of Ethics of the Medical Student plays a crucial role in the training of future ethical and competent physicians. By incorporating ethical principles from the beginning of their academic journey, medical students are better prepared to meet the complex challenges of medical practice, while always maintaining the highest standards of ethics and integrity.

Keywords: Ethics, Health, Medicine, Training.

1 INTRODUCTION

Ethics plays a key role in the training and practice of medical students, since these future professionals will be responsible for the care of the health and well-being of patients. In this context, the elaboration and adherence to a specific code of ethics for medical students is extremely important to ensure proper conduct during their training and medical career. Authors such as Beauchamp and Childress (2013) emphasize the relevance of medical ethics based on principles such as autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, and justice.

The code of ethics for medical students serves as a guide to direct their ethical actions and decisions throughout the learning and practice process. In it, the essential values that should guide the behavior of students are outlined, promoting integrity, empathy and respect. The doctor-patient



relationship is built on trust, and medical students must learn from an early age to cultivate this trust through exemplary ethical behavior (HAIDET et al., 2002; HAIDET; STEIN, 2006; GAUFBERG et al., 2014).

In addition, the code of ethics for medical students addresses the importance of academic and scientific honesty, underscoring the need to avoid data falsification and plagiarism. Integrity in research and clinical practice is essential to maintaining the credibility of the medical profession (BIONI, 2020; DANTAS; NOGAROLI, 2020).

The relationship between students and teachers is also contemplated in the code of ethics, highlighting the importance of mutual respect and collaboration. Authors such as Cruess and Cruess (2008) emphasize that ethics in medical education involves not only the proper treatment of patients, but also the healthy relationship between members of the health team.

It is worth mentioning that the code of ethics for medical students is not static and should be reviewed periodically to adapt to changes in society, medicine and emerging ethical practices. Authors like Veatch; Haddad and English (2014), stress the importance of addressing contemporary ethical dilemmas, such as patient privacy in a digitized world and issues of equity in access to health care.

2 THE CODE OF ETHICS OF THE MEDICAL STUDENT (CEEM)

The Code of Ethics of the Medical Student (CEEM) is a document prepared by the Federal Council of Medicine (CFM) in 2018, which establishes the principles and ethical guidelines to be followed by medical students during their academic training and professional practice.

The importance of the EMEC lies in several aspects:

Ethical guidance: The code provides clear guidelines and ethical guidelines to medical students, helping them to understand and internalize the fundamental ethical principles that should guide their professional conduct. This contributes to the training of professionals committed to medical ethics and the provision of quality health care.

Integral training: The CEEM is not limited only to technical and scientific aspects of medicine, but also covers the integral formation of the student, valuing humanistic aspects, the doctor-patient relationship, social responsibility and health promotion. This broad approach contributes to a more complete and sensitive training to the needs of patients.

Respect for patients' rights: The code emphasizes the importance of respecting the dignity, autonomy, and rights of patients. This includes a duty to preserve the confidentiality of information, obtain informed consent, respect privacy, and make decisions based on the best interest of the patient. These principles are fundamental to an ethical and humanized medical practice.

Social responsibility: CEEM highlights the social responsibility of medical students in relation to community health and equity in access to health services. This encourages students to engage in



health promotion activities, disease prevention and action in underserved areas, contributing to the improvement of the health conditions of the population.

Standardization of conduct: The code establishes a set of ethical principles common to all medical students, regardless of the educational institution in which they are enrolled. This promotes the standardization of ethical conduct and cohesion in the exercise of the profession, avoiding disparities and ensuring a high ethical standard throughout medical education.

The following are 15 important points of this code.

1. The medical student must respect human life in all its forms, seeking to preserve, promote and restore the health of individuals.
2. It is essential that the student exercises his profession with responsibility, competence, honesty and diligence, always prioritizing the well-being of the patient.
3. Professional secrecy is an essential principle. The student must keep secret all confidential information obtained in the exercise of the profession.
4. Respect for the patient's autonomy and dignity is paramount. The student must always inform and obtain the free and informed consent of the patient before any procedure.
5. The student must ensure their continuous training and constant updating, seeking to improve their technical and scientific knowledge.
6. It is forbidden for the medical student to discriminate or practice any form of violence or prejudice against patients, colleagues of the profession or anyone involved in health care.
7. Honesty is an essential value. The student must provide correct, accurate and transparent information to patients, avoiding any form of deception or falsehood.
8. It is forbidden for the medical student to use his knowledge or position to obtain undue personal advantage or harm other professionals.
9. Respect for the academic environment and hierarchy is important. The student should treat his or her peers, faculty, and other staff members with respect, courtesy, and collaboration.
10. It is the duty of the student to actively participate in educational, clinical and scientific activities, demonstrating interest and commitment to learning.
11. The student must recognize their limits and seek support whenever necessary, ensuring the safety and quality of patient care.
12. Scientific research should be conducted with ethics and respect for established norms, ensuring data integrity and the privacy of participants.
13. The student should avoid conflicts of interest that could compromise their impartiality and independence in clinical decision-making.
14. It is essential that the student denounces any ethical violation witnessed or practiced by other professionals, aiming at the protection of the rights and well-being of patients.



15. The student must contribute to the improvement of the health system, participating in discussions and proposals aimed at improving the quality and accessibility of medical care.

3 CONCLUSION

The Code of Ethics of the Medical Student is extremely important, as it provides a solid ethical basis for the training of future doctors, guiding them in making ethical decisions, in the relationship with patients and in the promotion of health. By internalizing these ethical principles from the beginning of their education, students will be better prepared to practice medicine in a responsible, compassionate, and ethical manner throughout their careers.



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