

What You Should Know About Medical Ethics

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Burnaby

Division of Family Practice

A GPSC initiative



The Burnaby Division of Family Practice

divisionsbc.ca/burnaby

Why are we here?



The Circle of Caring



OUR PATIENTS

Expanding the Circle of Caring

OUR PATIENTS

OUR COMMUNITY

Expanding the Circle of Caring

OUR PATIENTS

OUR COMMUNITY

OUR FUTURE

We care about our patients



We care about our community



***Walk With Your Doc: Saturday, May 9th, 2015 Kitsilano Beach Park
Move for Health Day: Sunday, May 10th in Burnaby***

What You Should Know About Medical Ethics

- 1. Why ethics matters*
- 2. Understanding ethical principles*
- 3. Preventive ethics*



An Ethics Quiz

1. **Bioethics** relates to:
 - a. telling the truth in a celebrity biography

An Ethics Quiz

1. **Bioethics** relates to:
 - a. telling the truth in a celebrity biography
 - b. treating animals humanely

An Ethics Quiz

1. **Bioethics** relates to:
 - a. telling the truth in a celebrity biography
 - b. treating animals humanely, or
 - c. medical ethics

Answer:

- C. **Medical ethics** is the application of ethical principles to health care ...



Principles of Bioethics

Nonmaleficence: Do no harm.

Beneficence: Do good.

Autonomy: Respect patients' choices.

Justice: Be fair. Treat like cases alike.

Confidentiality: Respecting personal information.

Applying the Principles

Dilemmas arise in cases where the principles conflict

e.g. Respecting an individual's autonomy when they are at risk to themselves or others



Applying the Principles

A treatment is considered appropriate if the potential benefits outweigh the potential burdens.

Applying the Principles

Life support (e.g. CPR, artificial feeding, ventilation) is appropriate if it provides an acceptable quality of life (as judged from the patient's perspective).

Question 2

- True or false?

Bioethics has more to do with philosophy than with the day-to-day work of healthcare.



Answer:

- False.

*Medical ethics
is the foundation of medicine . . .*



***Our tests and treatments are merely tools.
Ethics guides us in their appropriate use.***

Question 3

Autonomy is:

- a. The economics of the automobile industry,

Question 3

Autonomy is:

- a. The economics of the automobile industry,
- b. A Tomorrowland attraction in Disneyland where kids can drive futuristic cars oddly powered by gasoline engines, . . .

Question 3

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Question 3

Autonomy is:

- a. The economics of the automobile industry,
- b. A Tomorrowland attraction in Disneyland where kids can drive futuristic cars oddly powered by gasoline engines, or
- c. The ability to make independent decisions.



Answer:

- C. **Autonomy** is the ability to make independent decisions.



Question 4

The single greatest threat to your autonomy is:

a. The health care system,

Question 4

The single greatest threat to your autonomy is:

- a. The health care system,
- b. Big Brother,

Question 4

The single greatest threat to your autonomy is:

- a. The health care system,
- b. Big Brother,
- c. Doctors and nurses,

Question 4

The single greatest threat to your autonomy is:

- a. The health care system,
- b. Big Brother,
- c. Doctors and nurses, or
- d. Your family.

Answer:

- D. If you were in a condition such that you were no longer capable of directing your own healthcare decisions

AND you did not make it clear what your preferences would be,

family members may be in conflict with one another OR they may decide what *they* want rather than what *you* would want.



Final Question

True or false?

Most ethical dilemmas are unavoidable.

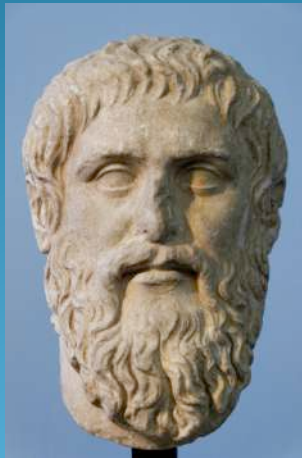
Answer:

- FALSE.

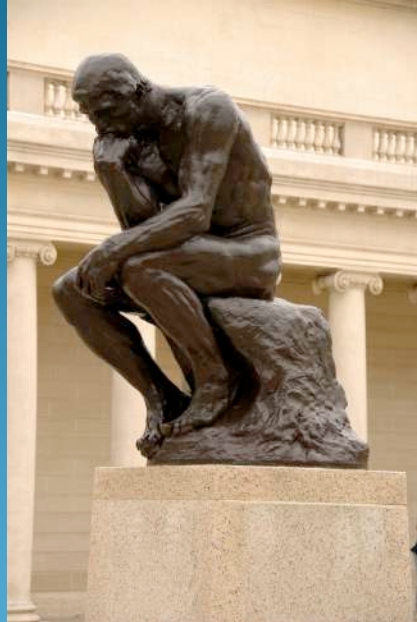
With proactive reflection and discussion, you can make your choices clear.

Why Ethics Matters

*Isn't ethics just abstract philosophy
for students, academics and older people?*



Analogy: Pondering the meaning of life



Analogy: Pondering the meaning of life

*Most people don't reflect on the meaning
of life, their values and life's purpose . . .*

Analogy: Pondering the meaning of life

until a crisis arises or they reach a crossroads (loss, midlife & the end of life)

Analogy: Using a map on your road trip



Analogy: Using a map on your road trip

*If we drive without a map (or GPS),
we can get distracted by detours,
accidents, breakdowns, other drivers and
the people we're travelling with . . .*



*We may find ourselves lost
and far from our destination . . .*

*We may find ourselves lost
and far from our destination . . .*

*and some of us are less inclined
to ask for directions.*

Why Ethics Matters: ***Everyday Ethics***

*Ethics applies every time you interact
with a healthcare provider*

Everyday Ethics

Confidentiality in the Doctor's Office

A mother might ask if her daughter came in earlier today and wonder what she discussed with the doctor.

Everyday Ethics

Confidentiality in the Doctor's Office

A concerned family member might call and ask about the details of a patient's medical condition.

Everyday Ethics

Informed Consent in the Office

A test – including a simple blood test – cannot be ordered without your clear consent.

Everyday Ethics

Informed Consent in the Office

*Do you have the key information
you need to make decisions about
treatment?*

The Principles of Medical Ethics

- 1. BENEFICENCE*
- 2. NON-MALEFICENCE*
- 3. JUSTICE*
- 4. CONFIDENTIALITY*
- 5. AUTONOMY*

BENEFICENCE

DO GOOD

The primary goal of medicine is to help the individual patient

NONMALEFICENCE

DO NO HARM

The 1st rule of medicine

“Above all else, do no harm.”

JUSTICE

TREAT LIKE CASES ALIKE

Be fair

...

My Golden Rule of Medicine

Treat every patient with the same care and consideration I would expect for a best friend and family member.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Respecting a patient's private information

Why confidentiality is important

If there was no assurance of privacy, the patient will not share all the information the physician requires to provide the best care.

When can confidentiality be breached?

DUTY TO PROTECT

When you pose a serious threat to others.

When can confidentiality be breached?

DUTY TO REPORT

*Unsafe Drivers, Child Protection,
certain sexually transmitted infections*

When can confidentiality be breached?

COURT ORDER

When can confidentiality be breached?

Minors and others who rely on others to provide consent

Who has access to your records?

- 1. Your physician and professional staff*
- 2. 3rd parties (insurance companies, lawyers) with your written consent (or by court order)*
- 3. Other healthcare providers involved in your care (your hospital team, specialists to whom you are referred)*

AUTONOMY

The right of the capable individual to direct his or her own healthcare

AUTONOMY

You have the right to refuse any treatment

. . .

AUTONOMY

But you don't have the right to demand treatment that is inappropriate or not available

Informed Consent

2 Keys:

- (1) enough information
- (2) a patient capable of understanding that information and making an informed decision



Informed Consent

You need **enough information** about the benefits, risks and alternatives of a test, procedure or drug before you can choose or refuse it.



Informed Consent

Due to illness or incapacity, you may not be able to give informed consent.

Who will decide on your behalf?

Medical Ethics in the Hospital

When I chaired Burnaby Hospital's Ethical Resources Committee, we consulted on ethical dilemmas faced by patients, their families and healthcare teams.

Medical Ethics in the Hospital

All of the patients were no longer capable of independent medical decision-making (e.g. unconsciousness, severe dementia). It was not clear what the patient would have chosen.

Family members and healthcare providers were in conflict.

Medical Ethics in the Hospital

*“The road to hell . . .
is paved with good intentions.”*

John Milton

Medical Ethics in the Hospital

*“The road to ICU . . .
is paved with clinical practice guidelines.”*

Davidicus Wong

Medical Ethics in the Hospital

*“The road to ICU . . .
is paved with clinical practice guidelines.”*

*Our treatments and tests are the tools of
medicine; ethics guides us in their
appropriate use.*

Medical Ethics in the Hospital

We would review the relevant ethical principles

*then step back to see the whole patient, looking at not only the **medical** facts but also **personal** and **social** factors.*

Medical Ethics in the Hospital

MEDICAL FACTS

Past medical history

*Current medical situation – diagnosis,
prognosis (what is expected)*

Treatment options (risks and benefits)

Medical Ethics in the Hospital

PERSONAL FACTORS

Personal preferences – values, religious and cultural beliefs, sense of meaning

What does quality of life mean to the individual?

Advance Medical Directives

Medical Ethics in the Hospital

SOCIAL FACTORS

The views of friends and family

Who else will be affected?

Preventive Bioethics

*“The kingdom of heaven is everywhere
but men do not see it.”*

Jesus of Nazareth

Preventive Bioethics

*“Ethics is everywhere.
We just don’t see it.”*

Davidicus Wong



Preventive Bioethics

1. Anticipate the future when you may be incapable and suffering from serious illness.



Preventive Bioethics

2. Understand the benefits & burdens of CPR, artificial feeding & artificial ventilation.



Preventive Bioethics

3. Consider what gives your life meaning and what constitutes a good quality of life.



Preventive Bioethics

4. Communicate your values and your wishes while you can.

Ensure your family knows what you would want.

Advance Directives

A statement of your preferences for medical care to be referred to when you are unable to make your own decisions

What procedures do you want?

What procedures do you refuse?

Under what conditions?

Who do you choose to make decisions for you?



Advance Directives

You may not wish to have CPR (chest compressions, assisted breathing, intubation, defibrillation) if you had an irreversible, terminal condition with no hope for a return to an acceptable quality of life.



Advance Directives

You may not wish to be on mechanical life support if you were in a persistent vegetative state with no hope of recovery.



Advance Directives

Always plan in advance.

Talk it over with your family and friends.

Choose someone you would trust to respect your preferences.

Inform your family doctor.

Put it in writing.

Advance Directives

My Voice



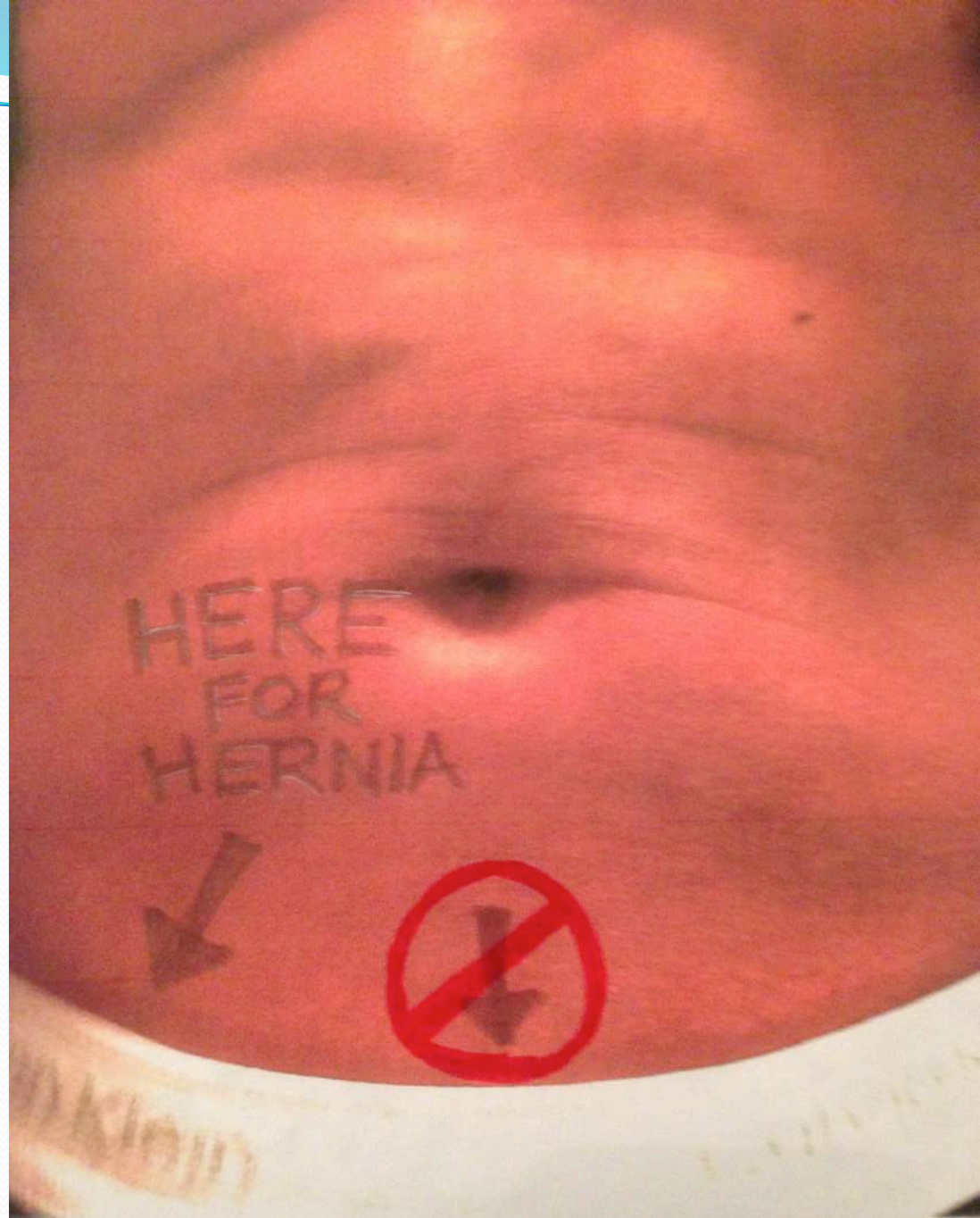
Advance Directives

Some simpler examples . . .



NOT
THIS LEG!

Here for hernia
not a vasectomy



SHARE

Let's create a healthier community



Why we are here

OUR FRIENDS

OUR COMMUNITY

OUR FAMILIES

OUR FUTURE

Our Expanding the Circle of Caring

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