

Comparison of Knowledge, Attitude and Practices of Medical Ethics among Medical Officers with and without Formal Medical Ethics Training

Our research study is titled 'Comparison of Knowledge, Attitude and Practices of Medical Ethics among Medical Officers with and without Formal Medical Ethics Training'. This study is being done by Ashma Shrestha, Carmina Shrestha, Jasmin Joshi and Shuvechchha Karki, interns along with Dr. Suchita Joshi from Department of Pediatrics at Patan Academy of Health Sciences (PAHS). You have been selected to participate in this study through random sampling. The purpose of this research study is to assess the effectiveness of medical ethics training carried out during basic medical training.

If you agree to take part in this study, you will have to complete the questionnaire on the next page. It will take you approximately 30 minutes to complete. You may not directly benefit from this research; however, we hope that your participation in the study may help us assess if any improvements are required regarding the teaching of medical ethics to medical students and bring forth appropriate interventions accordingly.

To the best of our ability, your answers in this study will remain confidential. We will minimize any risks to breach of confidentiality by providing unique codes to each respondent. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you can withdraw at any time. You are free to skip any question you choose.

By proceeding to the questionnaire on the next page you are indicating that you have read and understood this consent form and agree to participate in this research study.

Thank you

Agree to participate?

- Yes
- No

Have you had any formal medical ethics training (lectures/discussion sessions/case presentations) apart from those included in forensic medicine during MBBS?

- Yes
- No

This questionnaire is not to judge your competency regarding medical practice. We are simply trying to assess the effectiveness of medical ethics training during MBBS years. Hence, please fill this questionnaire based on your current understanding on medical ethics.

QUESTIONNAIRE

Comparison of Knowledge, Attitude and Practices of Medical Ethics among Medical Officers With and Without Formal Medical Ethics Training

RESPONDENT INFORMATION (PART A)

Age: _____
Sex: _____
Department: _____
Year of Completion: _____
Months of Practice after MBBS: _____
MBBS completed from: Institute: _____ Country: _____

QUESTIONNAIRE (PART B)

Please answer the questions below

(Please tick one option in all questions below except for those where multiple answer possible is mentioned)

- How often do you face an ethical dilemma?
 - Once a week
 - Once a month
 - Once a year
 - None till date
- If you ever face an ethical dilemma, who would you prefer to consult first?
 - Head of Department
 - Legal advisor
 - Colleagues
 - Hospital administration
 - Others Please specify: _____
- What is the source of your knowledge regarding medical ethics? (Multiple answers)
 - Work Experience
 - Lectures during MBBS
 - Books/Literature on Medical ethics
 - Seminar/Workshops/Continuing Medical Education (CME) on Medical ethics
 - Others Please specify: _____
- Lectures regarding medical ethics are given during which years of MBBS study? (Multiple answers)
 - Year I
 - Year II
 - Year III
 - Year IV
 - Year V
 - Internship

5. How many lectures are included during MBBS year? _____
6. Is medical ethics knowledge tested during MBBS exams?
 Yes
 No
7. Are PBL/discussion sessions/case presentations on medical ethics held during MBBS?
 Yes
 No
8. If yes, how many sessions? _____
9. How relevant is medical ethics to your work practice? (Please rate 1= lowest)
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
10. Should medical ethics be a part of medical education?
 Yes
 No
11. Would you attend future seminars/workshops on medical ethics if it is organized?
 Yes
 No
12. How would you rate your knowledge regarding medical ethics? (Please rate 1= lowest)
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
13. Which of the following ethical declarations have you heard of? (Multiple answers)
Also, please rate your knowledge regarding the ethical declarations that you have heard of.
- Hippocratic Oath 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- Declaration of Helsinki 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- Nepal Medical Council Code of Ethics 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- American Medical Association Code of Ethics 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- Australian Medical Council Code of Ethics 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- Others Please specify: _____ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
14. Is there a clinical ethical committee present at Patan Hospital?
 Yes
 No
15. How important do you think is the presence of a clinical ethical committee at any hospital? (Please rate 1= lowest)
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
16. Is there a legal advisor at Patan Hospital?
 Yes
 No
17. Who do you think is most capable to judge what is best for the patient?
 Doctor
 Patient themselves
 Patient's relatives
 Patient's close friends
 Others Please specify: _____

CASE SCENARIOS (PART C)

Please answer the questions below each case scenario

(Please tick only one option in all questions)

Informed Consent

1. A 25 year patient comes with his wife to the emergency department with high grade fever and headache. The patient is fullyconscious. The medical officer in duty feels that a lumbar puncture needs to be done.

What would you do? (P)

- Ask your junior intern to take informed consent from the patient
- Take informed consent from the wife alone after explainingto her the risks and benefits of undergoing LP
- Take informed consent from the patient after explaininghim the risks and benefits of undergoing LP
- Do lumbar puncture without taking consent from anyone

The MO informs the wife that her husband needs a lumbar puncture andexplainsher of its benefits and risks. The wife then signs an informed consent agreeing that her husband will undergo a lumbar puncture. During the procedure, the patient unaware of what is being done to him, becomes restless and asks for the procedure to be stopped. The medical officer shouts at the patient for being uncooperative and tells him that his wife has consented to the procedure. Do you think what the doctor did was ethical? (A)

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Has any principles of ethics been breached here? (K)

- Yes
- No

Which is the main principle involved in this case? (K)

- Autonomy
- Beneficence
- Non-Maleficence
- Justice

Revealing Information to Patient

2. A 65 year-old man presents to the surgical OPD with a history of vomiting, loss of appetite, and black stool for past 3 months. An endoscopy is being performed and a hard mass present in the gastric antrum is biopsied and sent for histopathology. When the lab results arrive, the patient's son asks the medical officer present to tell him what the lab results say. The MO reveals to the son that his father has gastric cancer. The son then requests the MO to not tell his father about his diagnosis as he will worry about his condition. The patient enquires the MO how his tests went.

What would you do? (P)

- Talk with the patient if he wants to know about the diagnosis
- Counsel the son and tell the patient about his diagnosis
- Inform closerelatives and come to a consensus on whether to tell the patient about his diagnosis or not
- Not tell the patient about his diagnosis respecting the son's request

The doctor counsels the son that such diagnosis should be told to the patient. However after receiving threats from the son, the doctor does not inform the patient about his diagnosis despite the patient's desire to know. Do you think what the doctor did was ethical? (A)

- Strongly Agree

- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Has any principles of ethics been breached here? (K)

- Yes
- No

Which is the main principle involved in this case? (K)

- Autonomy
- Beneficence
- Non-Maleficence
- Justice

Confidentiality

3. A 58-year-old man is hospitalized with chest pain. The patient is fully conscious. His wife asks the medical officer present there about the patient's condition, saying that she is his wife and also verifies this by showing her citizenship.

What would you do? (P)

- Discuss with your senior
- Talk to the patient if he wants to tell his wife
- Give the wife details about the patient without asking the patient
- Ignore the wife's demands

The MO informs the wife that he will talk to the patient first. However, the wife becomes infuriated and storms off the floor, threatening to sue the medical officer because he/she refused to give any information. The MO apologizes to the patient for upsetting his wife by not speaking with her about his medical problems. Do you think what the doctor did was ethical? (A)

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Has any principles of ethics been breached here? (K)

- Yes
- No

Which is the main principle involved in this case? (K)

- Confidentiality
- Beneficence
- Non-Maleficence
- Justice

Autonomy

4. A 15-year-old unmarried girl comes to the OPD for advice on the use of contraception. She is not accompanied by a parent. Nevertheless she is healthy and eager to know about contraceptives and wanted to know which one would be the best option for her.

What would you do? (P)

- Advise the patient regarding use of contraceptive
- Refuse to give advice on grounds of underage

- Advise her to come back with her parents
- Consult with your senior

The attending doctor refuses to treat the patient and asks her to come with her parents. Do you think what the doctor did was ethical? (A)

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Has any principles of ethics been breached here? (K)

- Yes
- No

Which is the main principle involved in this case? (K)

- Autonomy
- Beneficence
- Non-Maleficence
- Justice

Do Not Resuscitate

5. A 64 year old man with a history of diabetes and end-stage renal cell carcinoma is admitted to the orthopedics department following a fall injury. He is diagnosed to have fracture of neck of femur. However he has a DNR form signed by himself on the grounds of end-stage renal cell carcinoma. The orthopedician advices on immediate surgery. The patient's family wants him to undergo the surgery.

What would you do? (P)

- Discuss with your senior
- Ask the patient if he wants to undergo surgery for neck of femur fracture
- Counsel the patient's family that since he is DNR, no intervention can be done on him
- Undergo surgery for neck of femur fracture without consent from anyone

The doctor tells the patient's family that nothing can be done as he has a DNR form signed and keeps the patient under observation. Do you think what the doctor did was ethical? (A)

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Has any principles of ethics been breached here? (K)

- Yes
- No

Which is the main principle involved in this case? (K)

- Autonomy
- Beneficence
- Confidentiality
- Justice

Euthanasia

6. A first born child to a married couple is revealed to have hydrocephalus with inadequate development of brain matter following delivery. The baby has very low chances of survival but is still thriving till 5 days of life. The parents tell the resident doctor that they do not want the child and if anything can be done to medically terminate the child.

What would you do? (P)

- Tell the parents that terminating life is illegal in Nepal and counsel child might survive
- Medically terminate the child
- Ignore the parent's requests and put the child on ventilator
- Advise the parent that the child might survive and that the best option would be to discontinue active intensive care and continue with normal care

The doctor counsels the parents that medically terminating a patient's life is illegal in Nepal and counsels them regarding care of such children. Do you think what the doctor did was ethical? (A)

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Has any principles of ethics been breached here? (K)

- Yes
- No

Which is the main principle involved in this case? (K)

- Autonomy
- Beneficence
- Non-Maleficence
- Justice

Withdrawal of Treatment and Autonomy

7. A 60-year-old with diabetic nephropathy needs dialysis. Though he is unsure about spending the rest of his life on dialysis, he agrees to start the treatment. Five months after going through dialysis, he decides not to continue with the dialysis. The patient is not depressed and has the ability to understand the consequences of his decision.

What would you do? (P)

- Make him sign an informed consent and discontinue dialysis
- Tell his family members about his decision
- Simply discontinue the treatment
- Explain the consequences, get an informed consent form signed, and then discontinue dialysis

The resident doctor tells his family about the patient's decision without the patient's consent and asks them to persuade him to continue with the dialysis or the consequences could be dire. Do you think what the doctor did was ethical? (A)

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Has any principles of ethics been breached here? (K)

- Yes
- No

Which is the main principle involved in this case? (K)

- Autonomy
- Beneficence
- Non-Maleficence
- Justice

Reportable Illnesses

8. A woman comes at 10 weeks of pregnancy for prenatal care at Patan hospital. While undergoing routine pregnancy lab tests, the HIV testing comes out to be positive. The medical officer informs the pregnant woman about her HIV positive status and asks if her husband has been tested for HIV. On hearing this, the lady becomes anxious and threatens the MO to not to tell her husband.

What would you do? (P)

- Counsel the patient on telling her husband about her HIV status and tell her husband even if she is unwilling
- Tell her husband about his wife's HIV positive status and ask him to undergo HIV test
- Counsel the patient on telling her husband and not tell the husband if she is unwilling
- Not tell the husband

The doctor tries to persuade her again but she refuses. The doctor arranges a meeting with her husband informs him about his wife's HIV positive status and requests him to undergo HIV testing himself. The pregnant lady becomes furious and threatens to sue the doctor. Do you think what the doctor did was ethical? (A)

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Has any principles of ethics been **breached** here? (K)

- Yes
- No

If yes, which is the main principle that has been **breached**? (K)

- Autonomy
- Beneficence
- Non-Maleficence
- Justice

Has any principles of ethics been **followed** here? (K)

- Yes
- No

If yes, which is the main principle that has been **followed**? (K)

- Autonomy
- Beneficence
- Non-Maleficence
- Justice

Doctor and Society

9. A 29 year old G₄P₃ lady undergoes caesarean section for non progression of labour. She is informed that she can also have tubectomy at the same sitting. The patient does not want another child and wants to get permanently sterilized. But she also says that her husband does not want her to have the operation.

What would you do? (P)

- Inform the husband without the patient's knowledge and try to counsel him
- Perform the operation
- Tell the patient to discuss about it with her husband first but agree to perform the surgery anyway
- Do not perform the operation without the husband's consent

The doctor takes informed consent from the wife and performs the tubectomy without her husband's knowledge. Do you think what the doctor did was ethical? (A)

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Has any principles of ethics been breached here? (K)

- Yes
- No

Which is the main principle involved in this case? (K)

- Autonomy
- Beneficence
- Non-Maleficence
- Justice

Reporting colleague's error

10. 25 years old sexually active woman presents with abdominal pain. The doctor prescribes analgesics and antacid and advises the patient to go home and rest. The doctor does not ask the patient about her last menstrual period and nor does he perform a pregnancy test. The next day, the patient presents to the emergency department with severe abdominal pain and is diagnosed to have ruptured ectopic pregnancy. A doctor on call questions the patient whether she knew she was pregnant; for which the patient replies that she has missed her periods for the last 2 months and had come the previous day with abdominal pain for which the doctor had prescribed medication for gastritis.

What would you do if you were in place of the second doctor? (P)

- Directly report the error of the previous doctor to the Nepal Medical Council
- Inform the previous doctor about his error and also report the error to the Department Chair
- Avoid telling the patient, the previous doctor or the Department Chair about the previous doctor's error
- Inform the previous doctor of his error and advice him not to repeat such mistakes

The doctor informs the previous doctor about his error and also reports it to the Department Chair. Do you think what the doctor did was ethical? (A)

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Has any principles of ethics been breached by the second doctor? (K)

- Yes
- No

Which is the main principle involved in this case in relation to the second doctor? (K)

- Autonomy
- Confidentiality
- Non-Maleficence
- Justice

REFLECTION (PART D)

After going through the case scenarios,

1. How relevant do you now think medical ethics is to your work practice? (Please rate 1= lowest)
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
2. How would you now rate your knowledge regarding medical ethics? (Please rate 1= lowest)
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
3. Do you think you need more workshops/training on medical ethics?
 Yes
 No
4. Have you used any resources (books, internet, etc) to complete this questionnaire?
 Yes
 No