

Medical Ethics

Dr. John. C. Fatiaki FFCGP
Epworth Clinic



Friday Joke:

"If an accountant's wife can't sleep, what does she do?"

"Ask her husband to talk about his day!"

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user card





Question:



What does a senior partner in an accounting firm .. **NOT**.. do to keep his employees awake on a Tuesday afternoon?

+

Answer:

Invite a medical
practitioner to talk
about medical ethics





Overview



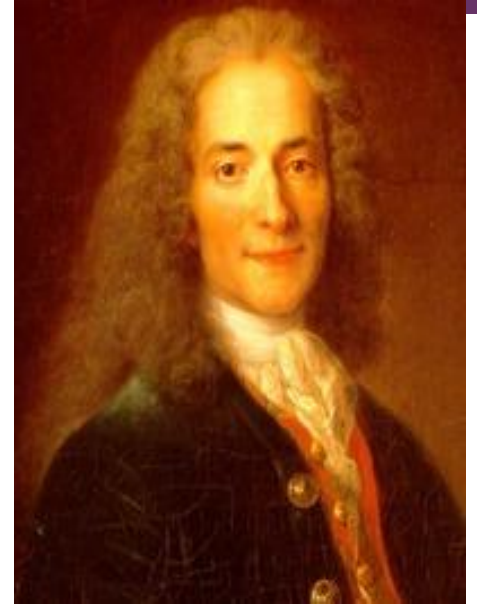
- Why teach Ethics ?
- What is Ethics ?
- Medical Ethics
- Principles of Medical Ethics
- A Historical Narrative on Medicine & Ethics



WHY TEACH ETHICS?

Doctors are men who prescribe medicines of which they know little to cure diseases of which they know less in human beings of whom know nothing

-Voltaire 1700's





What is Ethics?

- Oxford dictionary defines ethics as;

“... moral principles that governs a persons behavior or the conducting of an activity.”

- Merriam –Webster dictionary defines ethics as:

“...the discipline dealing with what is good and bad and with moral duty and obligations.”

- The branch of study which deals with what is the proper course of action for individuals interacting with each other.

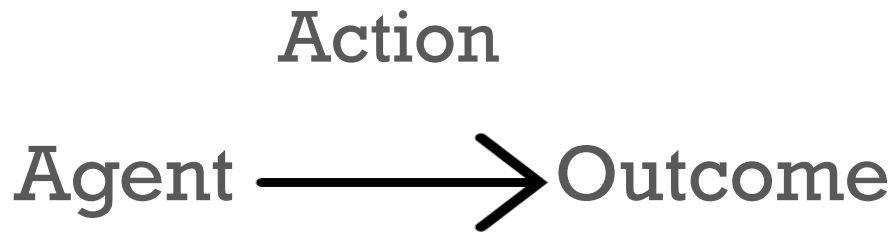
*“The term ethics is derived from the Greek word **Ethos** which means **character**”*



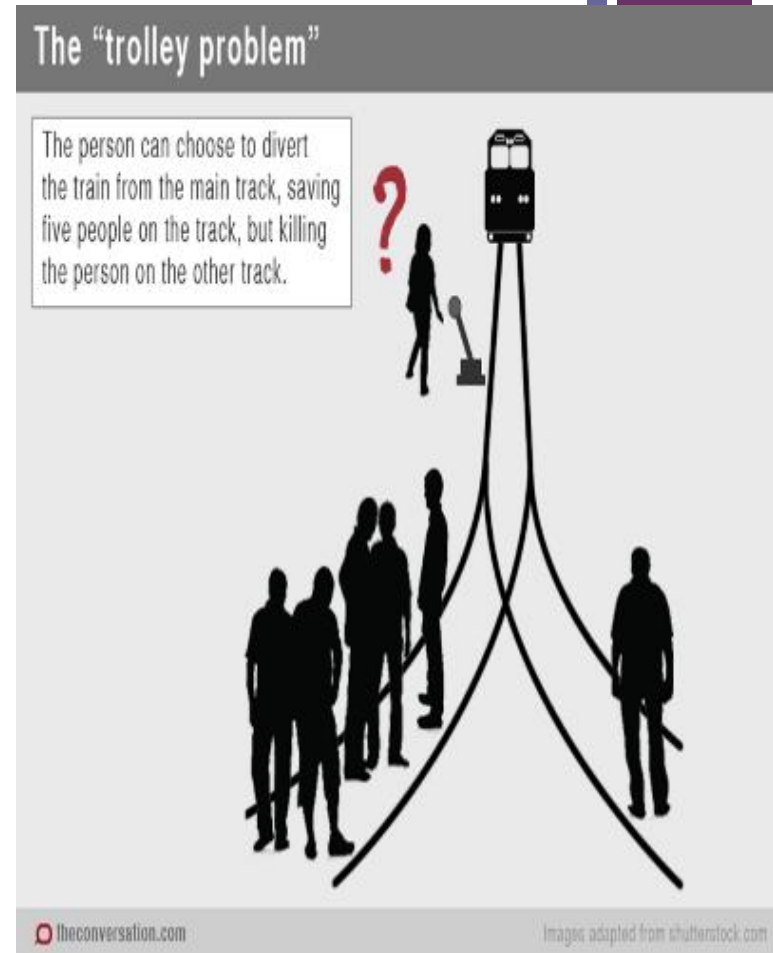


Ethical Theories: Ideas and Actions

- Deontology (duty): acts are right or wrong depending on the nature of the act itself, not the consequences.
- Consequentialism (outcome): things are only wrong if they cause harm and are right if they make other things better.



- Case Scenario: Abortion





- Virtue Ethics (morals and values): morality has its basis in the character of the moral agent. It stresses that being good is a matter of character which is developed.

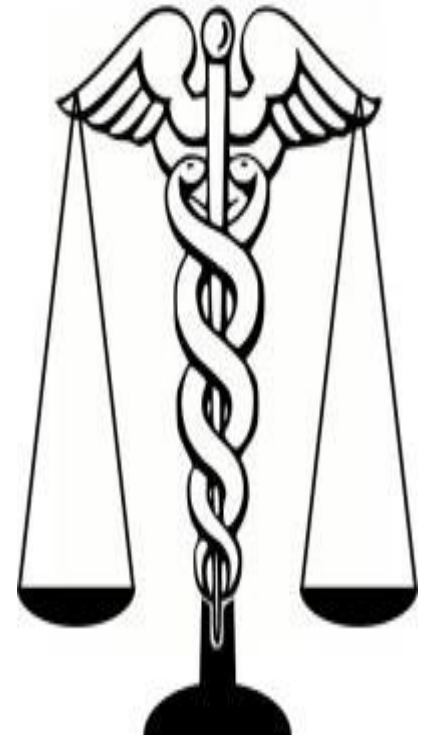


Medical ethics is a branch of ethics which pertains to medical practice

Medical Ethics = Virtue Ethics

+ Historical Background

- Pre – Hippocratic Era (Confucius et. Al.)
- Hippocratic Oath (350-150 BC)
- *Formula Comitum Architrorum* (5th Century AD)
- The AMA Code of Medical Ethics (1847)
- World War II Nuremberg Code (1947)
- The Declaration of Helsinki (1964)
- Geneva Declaration (1948) ... Modern version of the “Hippocratic Oath”





Autonomy



- Respect for individuals autonomy or ability to make decisions for his / herself
- Respect for **privacy and confidentiality**
- Need to provide sufficient information for them to make **informed choices**
- Protection of individuals with diminished or impaired autonomy
- Patients have the right to refuse treatment and or partake in medical research
- Autonomy forms the basis of **Informed Consent**.



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Confidentiality

Autonomy



+ Cease life support ??



+ Post life support ??
Release Alfie Evans





Non-maleficence

- Based on the Latin principle “*Primum non nocere*” i.e: “First, do no harm”.
- Always avoid causing harm either by acts of Commission (providing wrong or unnecessary treatment) or Omission (not providing the right or necessary treatment).
- Non compliance with this principle may result in medical malpractice or medical negligence.



Text

+ Medical Research??



+ The “Thanatron” vs the “Mercitron”





Euthanasia





Beneficence

- Do good
- Refers to the tradition of acting always in the patients' best interest to maximize benefits and minimize harm.
- The practitioner has a duty to continue to develop and maintain skills and knowledge through training
- Individual circumstances of individuals needs to be considered
- “Morally obligated to take steps to do good at all times to all peoples in all circumstances.” *Jim Summers*





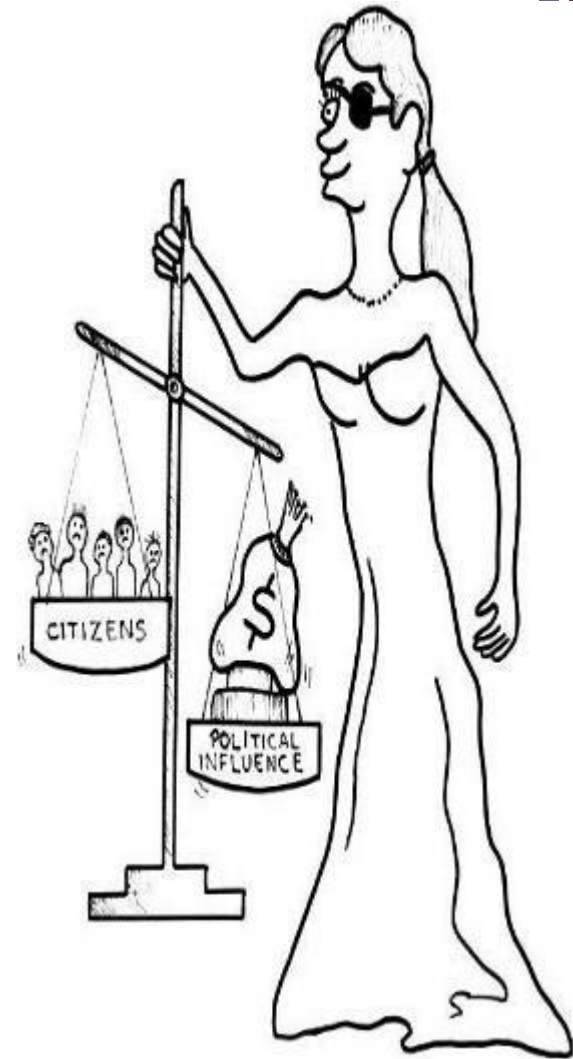
Vaccination: to do or not to do?

MMR Samoa



+ Justice

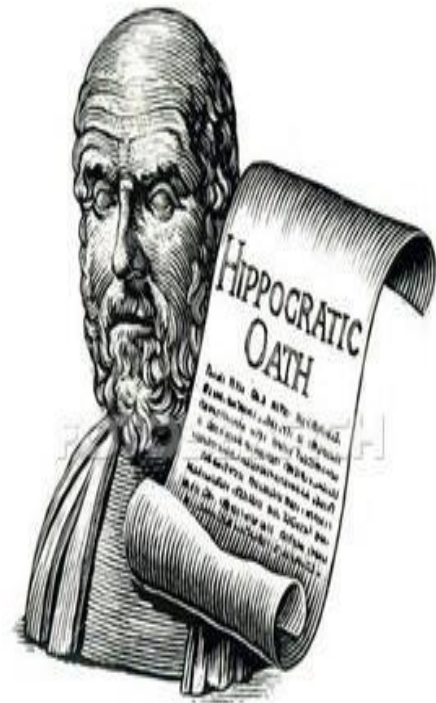
- Clinical needs should determine allocation of resources (equity)
- All patients should be treated equally with no discrimination.
- Procedural Justice
- Distributive Justice:
 - Case study: Meningococcal vaccination in Fiji





A Historical Narrative of Medical Ethics

- “The natural healing force within each of us is the greatest force in getting well.”
- “Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food.”
- “Everything in excess is opposed by nature.”
- “That which is used develops... that which is not used wastes away.”
- “If you are in a bad mood go for a walk if you are still in a bad mood go for another walk.”
- “Declare the past, diagnose the present, foretell the future.”
- “If we could give every individual the right amount of nourishment and exercise, not too little and not too much, we would have found the safest way to health.”
- With purity and holiness I will pass my life and practise my art
- ...” some patients though conscious that their condition is perilous, recover their health simply through their contentment with the goodness of the physician.”
- “Wherever the art of medicine is love ... there is also a love of humanity.”





- 200 AD Galen
- 500- 1000 AD Muslim Renaissance
- 1400- 1700 European Renaissance
- 1800- 1900's
 - Giovanni Morgagni (Anatomist)
 - “Symptoms are the cries of the suffering organs.”
 - France the Centre of Medical Excellence
 - Grand ward rounds
 - Development of the stethoscope
 - Dr Rene Laennec (1816)

What of the Present and The Future ??
- Technology





The End



"I took a course in ethics, but everything was contradicted by the course I took in accounting."