

**University of Health Sciences**  
**Project Professionalism Punjab**  
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The Nine Principles of Medical Ethics or in the words of Dr. Ludenberg the nine “bedrocks” form the code of conduct that every physician must meticulously follow in all situations, at all times. But some might question their significance and provide excuses for their inability to comply in all circumstances.

Are these principles really important for quality health care delivery?

Let’s switch roles for today and slip into the shoes of a patient, our key health care recipient, and reach a consensus to the answer of this question.

You walk into a doctor’s clinic with a terrible headache. The doctor curtly replies to you, disregards your concerns about the condition and callously hands you over a prescription of pain killer. Would you regard this behavior of his as of ‘compassion & respect’? If he does not even take an take a comprehensive history curtailing your complains with the “I know, I know. It’s just tension headache” attitude. And later on, you get diagnosed as having a lethal brain tumor. Is this behavior of ‘lack of competence’ acceptable for you?

***‘Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.’***

You are a mechanic who barely lives from hand to mouth and the physician you visit for your jaundice orders expensive laboratory tests and specific high cost medicines just because he gets a share from the pharmaceutical company and the laboratory. Is this ‘fraud’ and ‘deception’ fair? How would you rate those ‘colleagues of his who did not report his corrupt activities’ just to remain in his good books and allowed a destitute such as you to be robbed?

***‘Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.’***

Your brother gets stabbed in the chest by a robber and is gasping for breath. The nearest hospital that you rush him to has the policy of not taking a medico legal case until it gets reported to the police and the nearest police station is at least 30 kilometers away. Your brother does not make it to the police station. Would you forgive the policy devisors and ‘the doctors who showed no opposition to this policy’ despite the fact that it is an ‘utter disregard of the best interest of the patient?’

***‘Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.’***

You overhear a doctor chortling with laughter at the cafeteria with his colleagues about an embarrassing urological/gynecological condition that you have. What are your feelings and sentiments on this 'breach of privacy and confidence?'

***'Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.'***

You are a patient of diabetes, hypertension and bronchial asthma. You visit your Surgeon for diabetic foot and also report your high blood pressure. The surgeon disregarding the complexity of your medical issues and not wanting to refer you to a Medical Specialist because then he may that he may lose a patient for the next visit, advises you Beta Blockers. Your asthma exacerbates causing you to land in Intensive Care Unit. What is your say on this 'hesitance of seeking appropriate consultation when required?'

***'Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.'***

You are a young lady in your twenties and are facing harassment by colleagues at the department. Should you continue to work under these stifling circumstances or should you be 'free to choose whom to serve and which environment to work in?'

***'Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.'***

Your mother recently passed away. She had a painful death due to stage 4 Cancer Breast: a fate that could have been averted, if she had the awareness of breast self examination due to the health awareness activities, causing the disease to be diagnosed at an earlier stage and rendering it curable.

Will you absolve the doctors in your locality who were so busy with private practice that they had no time 'to participate in public health improvement activities?'

***'Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.'***

You are being rushed to the Gynecology Operation Theatre for a Cesarean Section because a complication of delivery has rendered it inevitable

The trainees inform the Gynecologist next on call on her mobile and seek her help but her comfort and sleep is more important than the patients' interests and she instructs the trainees to deal with the case themselves.

You end up losing not only your full-term baby-to-be but also your uterus due to uncontrolled bleeding.

How would you describe this gynecologist who made a mockery of the concept of 'responsibility to patient being paramount?'

***'Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.'***

It is freezing month of December. You are a sweeper whose one year old son has a bad respiratory condition. You are denied even emergency care at the private hospital just because you have no money to pay the fees for the doctors checkup. Your son dies in your hands on your way to the public hospital.

Would you not charge this doctor guilty who shattered this principle of 'medical care for all?'

***'Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.'***

It thus stands clear without a speck of doubt that these principles are the foundations and cornerstone of fulfilling the trust placed upon us in providing the best healthcare delivery.

Reflecting in the wake of these situations, I can assert with confidence that no human can ever regard a violation of these principles as acceptable.

'These principles are not just significant but crucial and indispensable for the quality medical care of

yours,

mine

and every human being that walks on the face of this Earth.'

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