

Ethics and Morals

- The word ethics is derived from the Greek word ethos, which means a person's character, nature or disposition.
- Ethics is the branch of philosophy that deals with the moral dimension of human life.
- Ethics deals with what is right and wrong, good or bad, what ought and not ought to be done.
- Culture and religion often play a dominant role in determining ethical behaviour.

- Bioethics: is concerned with the interface between the life science and ethics, it encompasses medical or healthcare ethics.
- Medical ethics, is the branch of ethics that deals with moral issues in medical practice.
- Professional ethics includes group standards and norms معايير as well as individual ethics.
- Morality is concerned with the standard of right or wrong behaviour, the values and duties adopted by individuals, groups and society.
- In other words is a system of right and wrong that enforced through societal pressure.

- Personal morals arise from religious beliefs, political views, cultural and family backgrounds.
- The term ethics and morals, ethical and moral are often used interchangeably. They are almost synonymous in that ethical action is one that is morally acceptable.
- However they are not identical. Morals usually refers to practices (is a matter of doing); whereas ethics is concerned with evaluating such practices.

- Law in pharmacy practice is related to opening and running a pharmacy and providing services to patients, prescribing, supplying, administering and disposing of medicines.
- There are three main areas of law: criminal law, civil law and administrative law.
- Criminal law is that which relates to maintaining social order and protecting the community as a whole.
- An example of criminal law that relates to pharmacy practice is the Medicines Act 1968.

- Medical ethics is also closely related to **law**, because ethical standards need to be precisely defined but are subjected to individual interpretation;
- However, ethics and law are not identical, laws differ significantly from one country to another while ethics is applicable across national boundaries .
- All Law has some moral basis, and in medicine, Law, morality and ethics are inextricably **بشكل معقد** linked.

- **Example** Should a pharmacist, based on his/her clinical judgment at the time of an emergency, provide a patient with a life-saving drug not authorized by a physician's prescription, when technically he/she is breaking the law, but is arguably acting ethically?
- **Example** Mercurial soap used for skin whitening is unlawful to be marketed in all developed nations but some of these nations allow the manufacture of such products for export markets.

- Studying ethics to health care professionals helps healthcare professional to respect other persons and their different needs, and it also helps the professional to take note of a patient's wishes.
- The study of ethics is grouped into 3 areas:
- **Descriptive ethics (comparative ethics)** simply describes the way things are - how people in different societies actually behave. (I.e. it is about facts or it is the study of people's beliefs about morality).
- **Meta-ethics** is concerned with analysis of the language that the people use when they discuss a moral issue, for example the meaning of the words right and wrong.
- **Normative ethics** is concerned with how things ought to be, how people should behave and how people justify decisions when faced with situations of moral choice. (I.e. it is about values).

Ethical Principles:

- Principlism, introduced in the late 1970's, is now widely used for identifying moral issues and as a start point for looking at ethical dilemmas.
- It identifies 4 moral commitments relevant in health care and compatible with the major ethical theories.

- **The 4 principles are:**
- Autonomy – self governance and respect for persons.
- Non – Maleficence – avoiding harm.
- Beneficence – providing good.
- Justice – Fairness.

- *Autonomy*, also known as *free will*, refers to the moral right of patients to make their own decisions.
- Autonomy, often referred to as *first among equals* because it contributes to the other three principles, is described as “the ability to think for oneself about the way one wishes to lead one’s life based on that thinking, and then to enact those decisions.”
- *Beneficence* means to do good and avoid harm, and includes an obligation to help patients.

- *Nonmaleficence* means to do no harm. Because most medical interventions, including nonprescription and prescription medications, have the potential for serious harm, the principle of nonmaleficence typically is interpreted to mean ensuring that potential benefits outweigh the potential risks.
- Example: refusal of a pharmacist to sell a medication if the pharmacist thought it was being purchased for wrong reason like diuretic for amlodipine ankle edema.

- *Justice*, sometimes referred to as *distributive justice*, is the principle that people in similar situations should be treated equitably.

- There is a need for increased ethical awareness in healthcare professionals due to:
- Advances and changes in health care and medical technology.
- The changing relationship between professional and patient.
- Changing interprofessional roles.

- In the case of pharmaceutical care, the goal is to benefit patients through the appropriate utilization of pharmaceuticals, using the essential knowledge that should always accompany such clinical intervention.
- The practitioner should not only be clinically competent, but should also adhere to the law, professionally determined codes of conduct, and ethical standards.

Ethics in pharmacy practice involves varied issues
the most important ones are:

- Pharmacist – Patient relationship
- Empathy
- Responsibility and accountability
- Privacy and confidentiality خصوصية والسرية
- Compliance and adherence
- Responding to errors
- Maintaining competence يحافظ على القدرة العلمية
- Supply of emergency contraception
- Abuse of the OTC medicines
- Supply of unlicensed medications

- Abortion
- Assisted suicide
- Donation of genetic material
- Euthanasia القتل الرحيم
- Performance enhancement (e.g., steroids)
- Promotion of prescription drugs
- Research and Investigational drugs
- Risk-benefit limitations (e.g., clozapine)
- Substance abuse and dependence