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HISTORICAL ASPECTS OF BIOETHICS

Medical ethics is a system of moral principles that apply values and judgments to the practice of medicine. As a scholarly discipline, medical ethics encompasses its practical application in clinical settings as well as work on its history, philosophy, and sociology.

Historically, [Western](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_world) medical ethics may be traced to guidelines on the [duty](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Duty) of physicians in antiquity, such as the [Hippocratic Oath](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hippocratic_Oath), and early [Christian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian) teachings. The first code of medical ethics, [Formula Comitis Archiatrorum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Formula_Comitis_Archiatrorum), was published in the 5th Century, during the reign of the [Ostrogothic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ostrogoths) king [Theodoric the Great](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theodoric_the_Great). In the medieval and early modern period, the field is indebted to [Islamic scholarship](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medicine_in_the_medieval_Islamic_world) such as [Ishaq ibn Ali al-Ruhawi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Ruhawi) (who wrote the Conduct of a Physician, the first book dedicated to medical ethics), [Avicenna](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Avicenna)'s [Canon of Medicine](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Canon_of_Medicine) and [Muhammad ibn Zakariya ar-Razi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_ibn_Zakariya_ar-Razi) (known as Rhazes in the West), [Jewish thinkers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judeo-Islamic_philosophies_(800_-_1400)) such as [Maimonides](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maimonides), [Roman Catholic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Catholic) [scholastic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scholasticism) thinkers such as [Thomas Aquinas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Aquinas), and the case-oriented analysis ([casuistry](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casuistry)) of Catholic [moral theology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moral_theology).

By the 18th and 19th centuries, medical ethics emerged as a more self-conscious discourse. In England, [Thomas Percival](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Percival), a physician and author, crafted the first modern code of medical ethics. He drew up a pamphlet with the code in 1794 and wrote an expanded version in 1803, in which he coined the expressions "medical ethics" and "medical jurisprudence". In 1815, the [Apothecaries Act](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apothecaries_Act_1815) was passed by the [Parliament of the United Kingdom](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parliament_of_the_United_Kingdom). It introduced compulsory apprenticeship and formal qualifications for the apothecaries of the day under the license of the Society of Apothecaries.