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Moral principles of medical ethics

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, theology, and sociology. Six of the values that commonly apply to medical ethics discussions are:

* [autonomy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Autonomy#Medicine) - the patient has the right to refuse or choose their treatment. suprema lex.)
* [beneficence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beneficence_(ethics)) - a practitioner should act in the best interest of the patient.
* [justice](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Justice_(ethics)) - concerns the distribution of scarce health resources, and the decision of who gets what treatment (fairness and equality).
* [non-maleficence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Primum_non_nocere) - "first, do no harm" [respect for persons](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Respect_for_persons) - the patient (and the person treating the patient) have the right to be treated with dignity.
* [truthfulness](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Truth) and [honesty](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Honesty) - the concept of [informed consent](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Informed_consent) has increased in importance since the historical events of the [Doctors' Trial](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Doctors%27_Trial)of the Nuremberg trials, [Tuskegee syphilis experiment](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tuskegee_syphilis_experiment), and others.

Values such as these do not give answers as to how to handle a particular situation, but provide a useful framework for understanding conflicts. When moral values are in conflict, the result may be an ethical [dilemma](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dilemma) or crisis. Sometimes, no good solution to a dilemma in medical ethics exists, and occasionally, the values of the medical community (i.e., the hospital and its staff) conflict with the values of the individual patient, family, or larger non-medical community. Conflicts can also arise between health care providers, or among family members. For example, some argue that the principles of autonomy and beneficence clash when patients refuse [blood transfusions](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blood_transfusions), considering them life-saving; and truth-telling was not emphasized to a large extent before the HIV era.