

SPRING SCHOOL MEDICAL ETHICS II

Teaching Medical Ethics in the Real World

Today as GPs we live in an atmosphere of increasing patients' rights, in a world where the pendulum has swung from the medical paternalism of the 1970s to the mantra of patient autonomy of the 21st century. When this is combined with the rapid advances of medical technology, the harsh reality of scarce health resources, and an ageing population we are confronted on a daily basis with difficult moral decisions, that often we are ill-prepared to address.

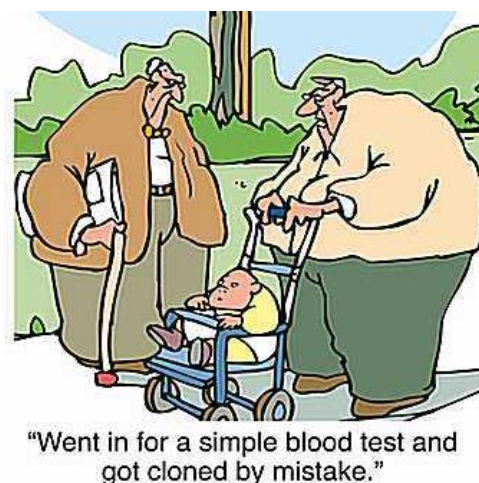
Our trainees can find themselves bewildered and confused, and frequently turn to protocols and guidelines to guide them through the ethical minefield of modern consultations. This is comparable to working in two dimensions in a three-dimensional world. Failure to get to grips with the underlying principles that underpin moral reasoning and ethical judgements can then lead to cynicism and eventually burn-out.

In these two seminars we help you to get to understand how to recognise ethical issues and how to make consistent moral judgements. In turn, this enables you to get to grips with teaching your trainees - firstly to recognise ethical issues and, secondly how to manage them in a systematic and fair manner.

We provide lots of tips and practical ways on how to teach practical medical ethics to your trainees.

The day is based on the application of the ethical principles discussed. The scenarios discussed will be very real and relevant to any practising GP, and with valuable tips on how to manage the dilemmas that we are all faced with on a regular basis.

The teaching is very interactive and relies on using real cases to illustrate the principles.



Morning session

The Duties of a Doctor

- What are the current legal and moral duties of today's doctors?
- What were the traditional values of doctors in the past?
- How do the GMC and BMA define these duties?
- We will discuss some specific examples when the duty of the doctor conflicts with the autonomy of the patient
- We will examine the moral responsibility of the doctor when treating minors
- We will examine the duties of a doctor when treating the 'hopelessly ill.'
- We will discuss the duty of a doctor to protect patients from 'unfit' or poorly-performing doctors
- We will outline guidelines to follow if 'whistle-blowing' becomes necessary

Afternoon session

Scarce Health Resources, Rationing and Justice in Health Care

- What is the role of the doctor in today's climate of limited health resources and rationing?
- How do you manage the conflict that occurs between the duty of the doctor and the perceived rights of the patient?
- We will look at the essential questions such as why rationing is essential, the best ways to do it, and why such decisions about rationing are relevant to our trainees
- How do we maintain Justice in the light of rationing?
- We will examine specific examples from other countries
- You will undertake a practical exercise in rationing care with real examples