

## ***Bioethics education in India***

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# Bioethcis

- Bioethics education can be divided into bioethics in
  - Medical education
  - Courses in other biological sciences.
- It is essential to make this difference as there is profusion of graduate courses in biotechnology and we are at the threshold of biotechnology revolution.

# Source of Data

- Published literature
- Internet Searches
- Personal communication and observation

# Medical ethics

# Role models

- In the past Medical students learnt about ethical behavior and good patient manners from their teachers and seniors.
- Medical care in the beginnings of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was paternalistic.
- It is assumed that the teachers and seniors set good examples.

# Changes in Medical Practice

- In the past, the relationship between the doctor and the patient was paternalistic.
- Today, this relationship has changed.
- Advancement of medical science and technology has made a tremendous impact on the medical practice.
- Rising cost of medical care and scarce resources poses dilemmas to the practitioner of medicine.
- Cost of medical education.

# Role models have failed!

- David Wakely and Lancet
- Indian Scenario: role models had failed.
  - Corruption in medical education and
  - unscrupulous practices

- Writing in National medical Journal of India, Dr. S. K. Pandya laments that today  
“Unfortunately the number of role models in the medical colleges is diminishing as unethical practices flourish and this adds to the frustration of students for they see a divergence between what is preached and what is practiced.”
- S. K. Pandya Clinical ethics: a practical approach. National medical journal of India 19: 340 -341.,2006

# Efforts to fight against the tide

- Individuals etc
- Groups- Forum for Medical ethics- Mumbai etc
- Institutions- bioethics centre Mumbai. etc

# OBJECTIVE OF MEDICAL GRADUATE TRAINING PROGRAMME- MCI

- (1) **NATIONAL GOALS** : (e)become exemplary citizen by
  - observation of medical ethics
  - and fulfilling social and professional obligations, so as to respond to national aspirations.
- (2) **INSTITUTIONAL GOALS** : (l) In consonance with the national goals each medical institution should evolve institutional goals to define the kind of trained manpower (or professionals) they intend to produce.
- The undergraduate students coming out of a medical institute should(
  - d) be able to appreciate the socio-psychological, cultural, economic and environmental factors affecting health and develop humane attitude towards the patients in discharging one's professional responsibilities.
  - (j) have personal characteristics and attitudes required for professional life such as personal integrity, sense of responsibility and dependability and ability to relate to or show concern for other individuals

• <http://www.mcindia.org> medical council of India salient features of regulations on graduate medical education, 1997 published in part iii, section 4 of the gazette of india dated 17th may 1997

# Current Scenario of medical ethics teaching in the country

- The MCI curriculum does not have Medical ethics as a separate subject in any of its courses.
- In the curriculum of forensic medicine, the students are expected to "observe the principles of medical ethics in the practice of his profession."
- St. John's national Academy of health sciences is one of the few medical colleges that have ethics as a separate subject for training of undergraduates.
- Many Universities and medical colleges are making efforts to introduce medical ethics in the curriculum.
  - Rajiv Gandhi University in Karnataka
  - MGR University in Tamilnadu
  - Maharashtra Medical University in Maharashtra.

- Since 2004, Indian Council of medical Research (ICMR) has been conducting sensitization workshops to the students as well faculty throughout the country.
- This has created a tremendous interest in Medical ethics in the country.

# Formal courses in bioethics

- Few of the law schools have started distance education in medical law and bioethics in the country. Eg. National Law school, symbiosis etc.
- These courses are more tuned to law than to ethics.
- All these courses are certificate or diploma courses.

# Interest in Bioethics training

- Consumer Protection Act.
- Research – International Collaborative Research
- Advance in Medical technologies.
- Commercialization of medical profession

# Challenges faced in teaching of medical ethics in the country Course

- At present the MCI curriculum does not have Medical ethics as a subject.
- Medical ethics needs to be made a separate subject by the MCI. Only then will all the medical colleges and the universities in the country implement it. We need to lobby with the medical council to implement it.
- Medical ethics should be made a compulsory course with the requisite attendance for award of the medical degree. Studies have shown that making ethics as an optional course in the medical colleges does not serve its purpose.
- Medical ethics need to be structured in such a way that the student is exposed to it through out the medical training period.

## **Challenges faced in teaching of medical ethics in the country Curriculum**

- A structured curriculum is necessary for teaching of medical ethics.
- St. John's curriculum has been modified by many universities.
- ICMR is in the process of formulating a curriculum for the bioethics in the country.
- MCI should develop its curriculum by adopting one of the curriculums.
- Care must be taken that the curriculum is not too much overloaded with legal issues.

## **Challenges faced in teaching of medical ethics in the country Evaluation**

- Evaluation of the students: the evaluation of the course should be left to the faculty teaching the course.
- The students have to be certified by the college stating that they have successfully completed the course with the requisite attendance.

# Challenges faced in teaching of medical ethics in the country

## Teacher's

- There is an acute shortage of trained medical ethics faculty in the country.
- There is an urgent need to train staff if medical ethics is being introduced as a subject.
- What can be done as a short term measure?
  - Urgent need to organize advance programs for the teachers who have undergone diploma /certificate courses in medical ethics.
  - There is a need to start Masters degree in medical ethics in the country.
  - More clinicians should become ethics teachers. By becoming ethics teachers hopefully the standard of practice will improve and there will be better role models for the students to follow.
- Medical Universities should endeavor to establish chairs of medical ethics as well as department of medical ethics to develop medical ethics in the country.
- There is an urgent need to incorporate philosopher's , social scientists and legal professionals into the faculty.- Dual appointments

# **Challenges faced in teaching of medical ethics in the country**

## **Resources for teaching ethics**

- There are few Indian text books on medical ethics.
- Most of the books deal with the legal aspects of medicine rather than ethical aspects.
- Some of the books are factually incorrect and are misleading.
- There is a dire need to have a good text book on medical ethics from Indian context.

# Ethics writing

- Writing on ethics in Indian context is negligible.
- General medical journals rarely carry articles on medical ethics.
- Even if articles on ethics are written, the articles deal more with the malpractice and legal issues rather than ethical thought
- There is a dearth of articles on medical ethics from the point of Indian philosophy. Research has to be undertaken to identify and interpret Indian philosophy to medical ethics.

# Ethics discourse

- Our ethics discourse should be on
  - what ought to be done
  - Why we have to do as it ought to be done
  - Are we doing the right thing.
- Throughout the ethics discourse, we need to remember that India is a secular and multicultural society the resource materials must incorporate this aspect of medical ethics.

# Reason for hope for ethics teaching

- At present, there is a tremendous interest in medical ethics in the country.
- Many universities are actively working on developing Ethics curriculum.
- ICMR is taking a lead to introduce a certificate as well as a master's course in medical ethics.
- ICMR is also in the process of publishing a book on medical ethics.

# Nurse's education

- The nursing education is controlled by the nursing council of India.
- There is no specific course on Ethics
- Topics are covered under
  - the module professional trends in general nursing 30hrs (GNM) (1986 and revised 2001)
  - Module on Medical aspects of nursing 1999
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# Pharmacy education- Indian Council of Pharmacy

## – 2.4 PHARMACEUTICAL JURISPRUDENCE Theory (50 hours)

- 1. Origin and nature of Pharmaceutical legislation in India, its scope and objectives. Evolution of the “Concept of Pharmacy” as an integral part of the Health Care System.
- 2. Principles and significance of Professional Ethics. Critical study of the code of Pharmaceutical Ethics drafted by Pharmacy Council of India.

# Alternate systems of medicine

- Homeopathy does not have an ethics course
- Ayurveda, siddha and Unani courses have ancient texts as part of the syllabus.
- I presume that these texts contain ethics in them

# St. John's National Academy and Medical ethics

# Early years

- St. John's is managed by the Catholic Bishops Conference of India
- Of the nine objectives of the college three of the objectives directly deal with medical ethics
- Ethics is being taught as a separate subject since the inception of the college -1963
- Till 1984 ethics was taught by the chaplains of the college.

# Changes-1984

- Fr. Thomas Kalam joined the faculty as the first professor of medical ethics.
- Restructuring of the course with the formal curriculum
- First year Students( Pre Clinical) Value classes
- Clinical years – ethics was taught in the fifth and seventh semesters (semesters when the students had no examinations).
- The total time allocated for Ethics was 50 hrs.

# Value Classes -20 hrs

- Introduction History of SJMC, Objectives of the college.
- Values norms
- Adjustment
- knowing myself
- My religious beliefs
- Concern for the needy
- the need for one another
- Sharing
- Meaning of life
- Love
- Character and temperament

# Clinical years

1. Introduction to medical ethics
2. Definition
3. Approaches
4. Perspectives
5. Ethics of an individual
6. The ethics of Human Life
7. The family and society
8. Death and dying
9. Professional ethics
10. Research ethics
11. Ethical work up of the case
12. Ethical work up of the cases.

# 2000- Implementation of Rajiv Gandhi curriculum

- The university in its revised curriculum increased the duration of ethics course
- The new regulations have mandated that Ethics should be taught in the following semesters
- 1<sup>st</sup> pre clinical year
- Clinical Years
  - 4<sup>th</sup> semester
  - 7<sup>th</sup> semester
  - 8<sup>th</sup> semester
  - 9<sup>th</sup> Semester

# **Ethics topics for under graduates-** **4<sup>th</sup> semester**

- **Module I General**
  - Need for ethics – types of ethics
  - Reasoning in ethics
  - Laws
  - Codes
  - Medical council of India code
  - Philosophy
  
- **Constitution of India**

# 7<sup>th</sup> semester

- **Module II Doctor Patient relationship**
  1. Consent
  2. Autonomy
  3. Confidentiality
  4. Patient rights
  5. Types of doctor patient relationship
- **Module Impediments to Doctor – Patient relationship**
  1. Medical negligence
  2. Consumer Protection Act
  3. Drugs & pharmaceuticals
  4. Alternate system of medicine.
- **Module Doctor – Doctor relationship**
  - 1, Consultation and reference
  2. Team concept
  3. Press & Doctor
  4. Advertisement

# 8<sup>th</sup> Semester

- **Module Ethics in beginning of life**
- 1. General Principles
- 2. Abortion
- Contraception
- Artificial methods of reproduction
- Cloning
- **Module End of life**
- Death & dying
- Palliative care
- Euthanasia
- **Module Transplant**
- Ethics of the institute /recipient
- Ethics of donor

# 9<sup>th</sup> semester

- **Module Clinic Research**
  - Animal Research
  - Human Research
- **Module HIV & AIDS**
- **Module Ethics in Intensive care**
  - Sharing resources
  - Medical utility
  - Technological advances.
- **Module Ethical work up of case**
  - Mark sigler method
  - Other methods
- **Module Problems in Ethics**

To be raised by the class

# Evaluation

- At the end of the ninth semester the students undergo a formal written test
- The test includes essay, short answers and problem solving

# Intern's Forum

- Since 1992 we are conducting an intern's forum.
- It is held bimonthly usually the 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of an even month.
- Current ethical issue or case is selected and two interns discuss the issue.
- The ethics faculty will moderate and guide the discussions.
- It may be a case presentation or a debate on the ethical topic.

# Paramedical courses

- Since 2004 St. John's Medical college has been conducting for all the paramedical courses i.e. lab tech, radiographer's dialysis tech etc.
- Total hours 30hrs

# First Year

- The students learn Anatomy, Physiology, Biochemistry, Pathology, Microbiology, which are common to all disciplines, and are introduced to their respective disciplines
- Introduction to Ethics
- Respect for life – Justice and Care,
- Informed Consent
- Autonomy, in the context of Indian culture
- Professionalism – Personal Value-based Ethics,
- Confidentiality, Reliability, Accountability

# Second Year

- The students learn more about their respective disciplines and are aware of medical practice
- Introduction of application of basic ethical rules in clinical settings
- AIDS and ethics
- Cancer and ethics
- Reproduction and ethics
- Transplant Ethics
- Genetics and ethics
- Animal experiments

# Third Year

- The students are involved only with their respective disciplines
- 1. Legal aspects
- 2. Dying and death
- 3. Euthanasia

# Bioethics in graduate courses

- There are no formal curriculum or courses in bioethics
- Madras University has entered a MOU with MGR university to develop a curriculum.
- EUBOIS
- There are 4 institutions that are supported by the UNESCO Asia-Pacific School of Ethics
- All India Bioethics Association Chennai.

# Chennai study

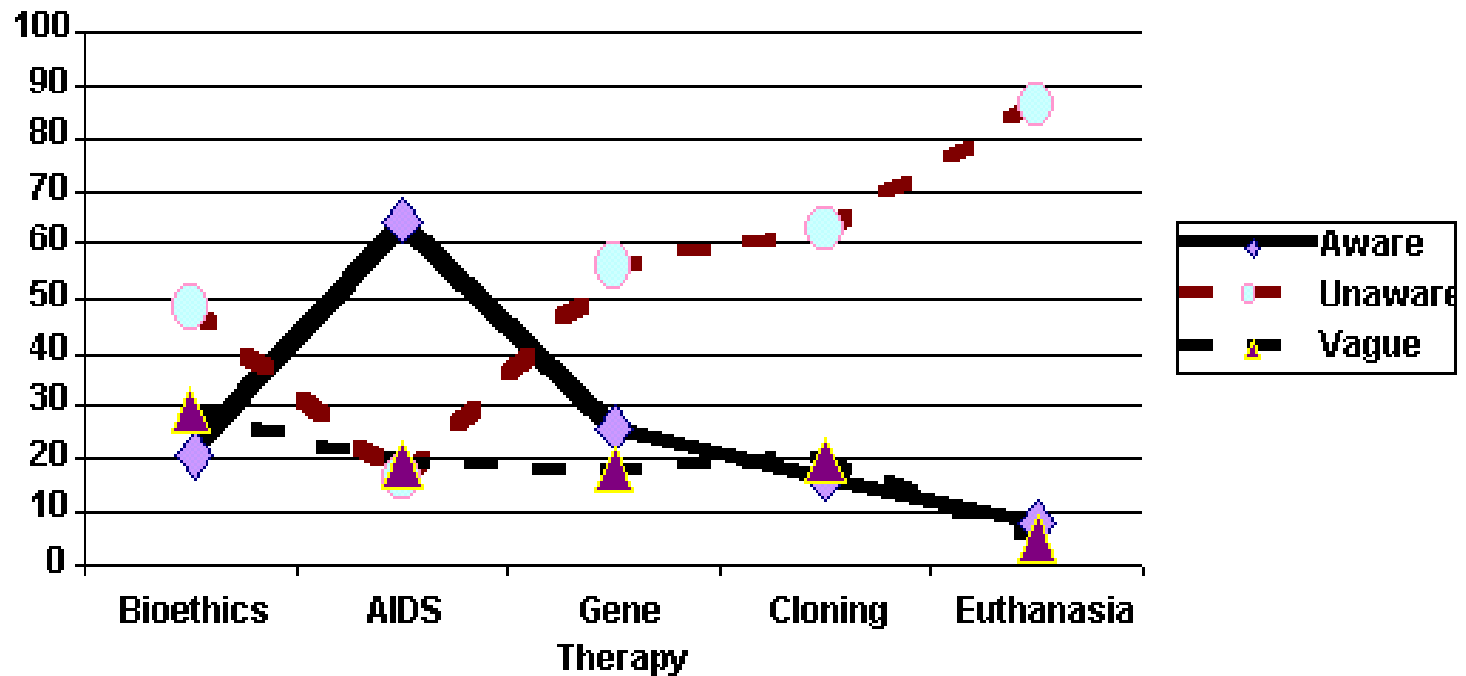


Figure 1: Knowledge of Bioethics, AIDS, Gene Therapy, Cloning and Euthanasia

# Doing ethics

- The first step to moral action is moral perception, since ethical problem can seldom be resolved if not first spotted.
- For teachers of medical ethics, developing this skill should be a priority and most critical place to do this is at the bedside.
- Daniel K Sokol BMJ 29<sup>th</sup> sep 2007



**Thank You**