
The Role Of Ethics In Medical Laboratory Science

1. What is Ethics?

Ethics is a principle which people live by. It is based on standards of what is considered to morally right and wrong. Ethics is concerned with what benefits the individual and the society. The word ethics originates from the Greek work 'ethos', which means custom or character (BBC, 2014). Medical ethics is the study of moral values and judgements as they apply in the field of medicine.

Ethical theories

There are two ethical theories that apply to medical practice. The first theory is Consequentialism. In this theory it is believed that the consequences of an action form the foundation for any valid moral judgement about that action. The second theory is Deontology, which outlines the significance of one's responsibilities and commitments, as opposed to the rightness or wrongness of the consequences of those actions (Hynes, 2013).

2. Core Values of in Medical Laboratory Science

There are four fundamental principles that govern ethics in medical laboratory science, all of them internationally recognised.

Autonomy

According to (Bhanji, 2013), autonomy gives the patient a right to make decisions about their own medical treatment. The decision is to be respected by healthcare providers. Healthcare professional are expected to be truthful and not to coerce the patient. The patient's autonomy should always be respected and healthcare professionals should not act paternally as this violates the patient's right to autonomy.

Justice

This principle advocates for action that is non-discriminatory and balanced from a societal perception. (Bhanji, 2013) Mentions that in the healthcare industry justice refers to fair supply of resources. All patients should be treated equally, regardless of their health problem. Individuals have equal rights in seeking proper healthcare and partaking in the planning of care and treatment.

Beneficence

The principle of beneficence is about the requirement to benefit the patient. Healthcare professionals are directed by the Hippocratic Oath which states: 'I will use the treatment to help the sick according to my ability and judgement, but never with a view to injury or wrongdoing.' (Grelling, 1999). Healthcare professionals serve their patients by helping them to maintain or

improve their health status. (Grelling, 1999) Further mentions that beneficence is composed of three elements: not to inflict harm, to prevent and remove evil and harm, and to promote good.

Non-maleficence

Closely related to beneficence, the value of non-maleficence suggests that no harm should come to the patient. The principle requires a purpose to elude needless injury or harm that can rise through acts of commission or omission, it can be considered “negligence” if careless or unreasonable risk of harm is imposed upon another (Grelling, 1999).

3. Importance of Ethics in Medical Laboratory Science

Confidentiality

Healthcare professionals are obliged not to expose information that patients disclose to them. The physician-patient relationship is of confidentiality protects patience from having their medical information disclosed to the public. There are legal and ethical boundaries that are against the improper disclosure of a patient’s information health professionals (Sheikh, 2007).

Research

Ethics in research important as it gives participants the right to consent. Patients must be made aware of all risks of the experiments. The trials of the experiment should be carried out following the correct operating procedure. The researcher is obliged to inform and ensure that participants understand the purpose, benefits to the participant and the society, and the possible risks of the research (Sheikh, 2007).

Another significance of ethics in research is veracity, which obliges the researcher to tell the truth about the research study even if it deters potential participants. According to (Sheikh, 2007), this component is closely related to autonomy. A person’s autonomy is trespassed if they are misled because information that may contribute to their decision making is withheld.

Public support

Good ethics promote support for medicine and medical research from the society. Any medical organisation with is looked upon positively by the public. This aids when it comes to seeking for research projects. Investors find it easy to fund research projects that are ethical and will lead to advancements in medical science. The public may also support in terms of participation in the research project if they believe that the organisation is ethical (Lewis, 2020).

Conclusion

Ethics play a vital role in medical laboratory science, without ethics the foundation of medical research would not be stable. People’s lives would be endangered as there would be no system that governs the operating procedures of healthcare facilities. There would be no support from the public and it would be difficult to get funds that are needed in order to carry out research that would help save lives. Ethical systems need to be enforced in all health organisations to ensure that people’s lives are in good hands and that the public supports

medical research.

References

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