



Code of Ethics

Fiji College of
General
Practitioners

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1. Preamble

This code of ethics articulates and promotes a body of ethical principles to guide doctors in their relationships with patients, colleagues and society.

The Fiji College of General Practitioners accepts the responsibility for setting the standards expected of its members.

2. Doctor and Patient

- (a) Consider the wellbeing of your patient.
- (b) Treat your patient with respect and compassion.
- (c) Approach health care as collaboration between doctor and patient.
- (d) Practice the art and science of medicine to the best of your ability.
- (e) Continue lifelong self-education to maintain and improve your standard of care.
- (f) Maintain accurate medical records.
- (g) Ensure that doctors and other health professionals upon whom you call to assist in the care of your patients are appropriately qualified.
- (h) Do not exploit your patient for any reason.
- (i) Do not engage in any form of sexual activity with a patient.
- (j) Refrain from denying treatment to a patient because of a judgement based on discrimination.
- (k) Respect your patient's choice to choose their doctor freely, to accept or reject advice and to make their own decision about treatment or procedures
- (l) Maintain patient confidentiality. Exceptions may include where there is a serious risk to the patient or other people or when required by law
- (m) Upon request of your patient make available to another doctor a record of your findings and treatment.
- (n) Recognise that an established therapeutic relationship between doctor and patient must be respected.
- (o) Having initiated care in an emergency setting continue to provide care until your services are no longer required.
- (p) When a personal or moral judgement prevents you from recommending some form of therapy inform your patient so that they may continue treatment elsewhere.
- (q) Recognize that you may decline to enter into or continue a patient doctor relationship where alternative health care is available and there is no emergency situation.
- (r) Recognize your clinical limitations and refer appropriately.
- (s) Recognize the need or request for overseas treatment in those patients requiring services not available in Fiji. Counsel your patient where necessary and help in any way possible to secure the required services.
- (t) Place an appropriate value on your services when determining your fees. Consider the time, skill and experience involved in the performance of those services together with any special circumstance.
- (u) Ensure that your patient is aware of your fees and be prepared to discuss openly health care costs.
- (v) When referring your patient for services or to institutions in which you have a direct financial interest provide full disclosure.
- (w) If you work in a group practice or institution place your professional duties and responsibilities to your patients above the commercial interest of the owners or others who work within this practice.
- (x) Ensure security of storage, access and utilization of patient information.

- (y) Remember your obligation to preserve life but where death is imminent and where curative or life prolonging treatment appears to be futile or where the patient refuses further treatment try to ensure that death occurs with dignity and comfort.
- (z) Respect the right of a terminally ill patient to receive treatment for pain and suffering even when such therapy may shorten the person's life.
- (aa) Recognize the need for physical, psychological, emotional and spiritual support for the patient family and other carers not only during the life of the patient but after death.
- (bb) Respect the patient's choice to explore other forms of therapy including traditional medicine, acupuncture etc. and be prepared to offer medical support when necessary.
- (cc) If at any time you are involved in counselling regarding transplantation involving either recipients or donors, living or dead, recognize the right of the donor, recipient and families and ensure they receive sensitive, compassionate support throughout the process.

3. Doctor and Colleagues

- (a) When involved in any form of clinical research ensure that the appropriate research committee appraises the project and considers the ethical implications of the research.
- (b) Ensure that a peer group reviews the results of any research before public release.
- (c) Honour your obligation to pass on your professional knowledge and skills to colleagues and students.
- (d) Before teaching, which involves patients ensure that patients are fully informed and have consented to participate and respect their right to withdraw at any stage.
- (e) Refrain from exploiting students or colleagues under your supervision,
- (f) Build a professional reputation based on integrity and ability.
- (g) Recognize that your personal conduct may affect your reputation and that of the profession.
- (h) Refrain from making comments that unnecessarily damage the reputation of a colleague.
- (i) Report suspected unethical or unprofessional conduct of a colleague only to the appropriate body.
- (j) Where patients complain to you about the conduct of another doctor respect the right of the patient and assist them in resolving the issue.
- (k) Accept responsibility for your own physical and mental health as this may affect your ability to carry out your duties.
- (l) Keep yourself up to date on relevant medical knowledge, codes of practice and legal responsibility.
- (m) Confine advertising of professional services to the presentation of information reasonably needed for patients and other professionals to make an informed decision about your services.
- (n) Any announcement or advertisement should be true in all respects and should not bring the profession into disrepute.
- (o) Obtain the opinion of an appropriate colleague acceptable to your patient if diagnosis or treatment is difficult or obscure or in response to a reasonable request by your patient
- (p) When referring a patient make available all relevant information and whether or not you wish the colleague to assume the continuing care of your patient.
- (q) Alternatively, when an opinion has been requested by a colleague report in detail your findings and recommendations
- (r) Should a consultant or specialist find a condition requiring referral to another specialist this should only occur following discussion with the patient's general practitioner - except in an emergency

4. Doctor and Society

- (a) In order to provide high quality health care you must safeguard clinical independence and professional integrity from increased demands of society, third parties, individual patients and governments
- (b) Refrain from entering into any contract with a colleague or organization, which may conflict with professional integrity and your primary obligation to your patient.
- (c) Recognize your right to refuse to carry out services you consider to be unethical, against your moral, religious or cultural beliefs or not in the best interest of your patient
- (d) Endeavour to improve the standards, quality and access to medical services in the community
- (e) Accept a share of the profession's responsibility to society in matters relating to health, safety, education and legislation that affect health.
- (f) Recognize your responsibility to give expert advice to assist courts or tribunals
- (g) When providing information to the public give opinions held by the profession in a form readily understood. If presenting a personal opinion that may contradict the opinion of the profession as a whole indicate that this is the case.
- (h) Do not countenance, condone or participate in the practice of torture or other forms of cruel, inhuman, or degrading procedures whatever the offence of which the victim is suspected, accused or convicted
- (i) Do not endorse therapeutic goods in public.
- (j) Exercise caution when publicly advertising non-therapeutic goods.
- (k) Do not have any public association with products that clearly affect health adversely

5. Conclusion

Changes in society, science and the law constantly raise new ethical issues and may challenge existing ethical principles. The Fiji College of General Practitioners will work with any of their members who are presented with an ethical dilemma to resolve issues.

6. References

- (a) Australian Medical Association - code of ethics 2006
- (b) World Medical Association - international code of medical ethics
- (c) Recommended web sites:

www.gmc-uk.org

www.ama.com.au