Defense Health Agency (DHA) Clinical Communities Speaker Series

CCSS Jun 2021: Exploring Evidence-Based Practice in Modern Medicine Primary Care

S06: Evidence, Evaluation, and Ethical Obligations: Looking at Evidence Based Medicine

Resource List

The American Medical Association created their original *Code of Medical Ethics* in 1847. The Code of Medical Ethics Overview (2021) provides a summary of the nine principles of Medical Ethics including Ethics of Patient-Physician Relationships, Ethics of Consent, Communication and Decision Making, Ethics of Privacy, Confidentiality and Medical Records, Ethics of Genetics and Reproductive Medicine, Ethics of Caring for Patients at the End of Life, Ethics of Organ Procurement and Transplantation, Ethics of Medical Research and Innovation, Ethics for Physicians and the Health of the Community and Ethics of Professional Self-Regulations. This is a great resource for health care providers to familiarize themselves with current trends and insight to ethical aspects of clinical care.

In addition to medical ethics changing over time, the concept of shared decision making has evolved in the health care professions over time. These two themes are very interrelated. "The Role of Patients: Shared-Decision Making" (2017) reviews how priorities have shifted from physician directed to patient directed decision making. Recent trends in care have focused on patient autonomy and patient-centered care. Shared-decision making provides the opportunity to patients and families to be informed about the different options available in a course of treatment. They can then arrive at a decision that will support the patient's most important goals and priorities.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has an Office of Science (OS), which is the agency's authority on scientific quality, integrity and innovation. Scientific Integrity and Public Health Ethics (2017) applies ethical principles, values and belief of stakeholders to public health action. The CDC typically takes population based approaches to address complex health concerns while weighing risk factors and differing perspectives to promote well-being. The goal of public health ethics is to understand and clarify principles and values to integrate tools of ethical analysis to guide public health actions. This information then can be used to create a framework for decision making, which are often undertaken by governments.

Evidence Based Medicine (EBM) is discussed in relation to ethical considerations. The article Evidence Based Medicine (2020) review how EBM is a manner in which scientific method is applied to current data in an effort to improve healthcare decisions. EBM supports the theory that available science, along with the healthcare professional's experience allow for the best treatment plan to be created. EBM has five main steps for implementation. Progressing through these five steps allows a clinician to arrive confidently at appropriate treatment approaches. This article also provides case scenarios to review how these steps can be applied in clinical practice.

The Department of Defense Medical Ethics Center (DMEC) (n.d.) heads the efforts in developing, evaluating and implementing a Department of Defense Medical Ethics Program (DoDMEP) that spans the Military Health System (MHS). DMEC is integrated into the Uniformed services University educational curriculum. A part of this implementation and support of ethical development across the MHS will include the creation of a DoD Health Care Ethics Portal that will provide resources for ethical decision making.

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