

Introduction to Medical Ethics

Introduction to Medical Ethics

1. Introduction

- Medical ethics is the study of moral principles that guide the practice of medicine and healthcare.
- It helps practitioners make sound decisions when values and interests conflict.

2. Four Core Principles

- **Autonomy:** respecting a patient's right to make their own informed decisions.
- **Beneficence:** acting in the best interest and welfare of the patient.
- **Non-maleficence:** avoiding harm to the patient.
- **Justice:** treating patients fairly and distributing resources equitably.

3. Professional Duties

- Practitioners must maintain competence, honesty, and confidentiality.
- Trust between patient and provider is central to ethical care.

4. Common Ethical Issues

- Consent, truth-telling, and end-of-life decisions often raise ethical questions.
- Conflicts can arise between patient wishes, family views, and clinical judgement.

5. Sources of Guidance

- Professional codes, laws, and ethics committees support decision-making.
- Religious and cultural values also influence ethical reasoning.

6. Summary

- Medical ethics applies principles of autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, and justice to guide fair, respectful, and responsible patient care.