

Ethical Issues in Healthcare

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1. Introduction

- Ethical issues in healthcare are situations where moral values guide difficult choices.
- They affect patients, families, practitioners, and institutions.

2. Consent and Autonomy

- **Informed consent:** ensuring patients understand and freely agree to treatment.
- Respecting refusal of treatment by a competent patient.

3. Confidentiality

- Protecting private patient information from unauthorised disclosure.
- Balancing confidentiality against the duty to warn or protect others.

4. Life and Death Issues

- End-of-life decisions, including withdrawing treatment and palliative care.
- Debates around assisted dying and the value of life.

5. Fairness and Resources

- **Justice:** allocating limited resources such as beds, drugs, and organs fairly.
- Avoiding discrimination in access to care.

6. Summary

- Healthcare ethics addresses consent, confidentiality, end-of-life care, and fair resource use, applying moral principles to protect patients and guide practice.