

Case Studies in Medical–legal Ethics

Case Studies in Medical–legal Ethics

1. Introduction

- Case studies apply ethical and legal principles to realistic clinical scenarios.
- They build analytical skills by linking theory to the messy reality of practice.

2. Purpose of Case Analysis

- **Application:** tests whether learners can use principles such as consent and confidentiality correctly.
- **Reflection:** encourages examination of personal values and professional duties.

3. Common Themes

- Informed consent disputes, especially with minors or incapacitated patients.
- Confidentiality breaches and the limits of disclosure.
- End-of-life care, including withdrawing treatment and advance directives.

4. Method of Working a Case

- Summarise the facts and identify the central ethical and legal questions.
- Apply relevant principles, laws, and professional codes to each option.
- Justify a recommended action and consider its consequences.

5. Lessons Learned

- Documentation and communication often prevent disputes from escalating.
- Many cases have no perfect answer; the goal is a reasoned, defensible decision.
- Landmark cases shape future standards and professional guidance.