

## From the Editor's Desk

Journal of Medical Standards and Ethics:  
Providing Ethical Environment for Healthcare Professionalism

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In the ever-evolving healthcare landscape, medical professionals, in particular, the physicians, are entrusted with the profound responsibility of providing quality care while upholding ethical standards. Medical professionalism, viewed through the ethical lens of jurisprudence, provides a robust framework for healthcare professionals to navigate the complex ethical and legal landscape of medical practice. Medical professionals can safeguard patient trust and ensure accountability by upholding ethical principles rooted in patient autonomy, beneficence, and justice. The ethical and legal dimensions of medical professionalism are not separate entities but interconnected aspects that shape the delivery of quality healthcare. By embracing this holistic approach, healthcare providers can strengthen the patient-physician relationship, enhance patient outcomes, and contribute to a more ethical and compassionate healthcare system.

The concept of medical professionalism encompasses a wide range of attributes, including competence, integrity, compassion, and accountability. Drawing upon the ethical lens of jurisprudence, which examines the moral and legal aspects of medical practice, we can better understand the critical role that ethics and the law play in shaping medical professionalism. By adhering to ethical principles rooted in jurisprudence, medical professionals can safeguard patient trust, foster a culture of accountability, and ultimately enhance the delivery of patient-centred care.

Ethics and jurisprudence are intertwined disciplines that guide medical professionals in navigating complex ethical dilemmas and legal frameworks. Ethics, as a philosophical discipline, provides a foundation for moral reasoning and decision-making. It examines concepts such as autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, and justice, which are essential in the context of patient care. Jurisprudence, on the other hand, encompasses the legal principles, regulations, and policies that govern medical practice. It ensures that medical professionals abide by the law and face legal consequences when they deviate from accepted standards.

The public expectation of any healthcare professional safeguarding patient trust. At the heart of medical professionalism lies the trust patients place in their healthcare providers. Upholding ethical standards through the lens of jurisprudence is crucial in fostering and preserving this trust. When medical professionals adhere to ethical principles, they demonstrate integrity, transparency, and respect for patient autonomy. By respecting patient confidentiality, providing accurate information, and obtaining informed consent, healthcare providers can establish a strong foundation of trust with their patients. This trust is not only vital for individual patient well-being but also for the overall integrity of the healthcare system.

Medical professionalism is concerned with a commitment to accountability, both ethically and legally. Jurisprudence

serves as a framework for defining the boundaries of acceptable medical practice and outlining the consequences of professional misconduct. Ethical breaches, such as negligence, fraud, or breach of confidentiality, not only harm individual patients but also undermine public trust in the medical profession as a whole. By embracing the ethical and legal obligations inherent in medical practice, professionals can ensure patient safety, promote professional development, and contribute to a culture of continuous improvement.

The ethical lens of jurisprudence offers guidance to medical professionals in navigating the delicate balance between patient autonomy and paternalistic decision-making. While respecting patient autonomy is paramount, legal and ethical considerations may arise when individuals make choices that could be detrimental to their health or well-being. Medical professionals must navigate these complexities by upholding ethical principles, seeking informed consent, and advocating for the best interests of their patients when necessary. Striking this balance cultivates a patient-centred approach that respects individual choices while prioritizing patient welfare.

The above viewpoint underscores the necessity of creating and prioritizing a platform that will encourage an ethical environment. It is the concern that birthed the Journal of Medical Standards and Ethics (JMEDSE). By approving the establishment of JMEDSE, our regulatory and accrediting body, the Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria (MDCN), has taken the lead ahead of other regulatory and accrediting bodies in the country in recognizing the necessity of maintaining such an environment. This singular act has left physicians with no alternative but to maintain sublime conduct of high ethical and moral standards in the day-to-day healthcare chores and responsibilities.

JMEDSE will aim to focus on the needs of professionals who are engaged in making difficult ethical decisions in health care, and therefore, features original peer-reviewed research papers on issues in clinical ethics, case studies with extensive commentary from experts and updates on important legal developments, devoted to the discussion of key issues related to medical ethics and its application in clinical practice, research, and policy, upholding the principles of professional standards. With an international editorial board, it features increasing coverage of developments around the globe. Published quarterly, the journal publishes peer-reviewed articles under the headings of Case Studies, Health-related

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Public Policy, Empirical Ethics, relevant reviews and other professional communications. Additional materials of interest include cross-disciplinary debate to increase the understanding of the complex ethical issues confronting providers and recipients of health care, innovative handling of medical ethical dilemmas, and advocacies for good healthcare/medical practice.

The formal component of the scholarly communication system, that is to say, the publication of an article in this peer-reviewed learned journal, serves many purposes outside of simple communication. It is a nexus in the development of a mutually respected network of knowledge in a coherent manner. Additionally, JMEDSE will position itself as prima facie evidence for quality and impactful research work of its authors and supporting institutions. For all these reasons and more, it is important to lay down standards of expected ethical

behaviour by all parties involved in the act of publishing: the author, the journal editor, the peer reviewer, and the publisher.

Contributors are admonished to be conversant with the elaborate and distinct ethical procedures, generally reflected in the Guide for Authors section of the journal and comply with discipline-specific standards or standard-setting bodies, such as the International Council of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE)[1] and Consolidated Standards of Reporting as enunciated through relevant linked sections.

#### Reference

1. International Council of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE). <https://www.icmje.org>.