Professionalism, a Missing Link in Teaching & Assessment

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What we discuss today

- Definition
- Explanation
- Examples of Exemplary Professional Conduct
- Examples of Lapses in Professional Conduct
- Behaviors That Warrant Immediate Intervention
- How to address unprofessional behavior
- Teaching Methods of Professionalism
- Measuring Professionalism

Definition

- "Medical Professionalism" is:
 the basis of medicine's contract with society
 - everything a doctor needs to do to undertake his or her job
 - a commitment on the part of the individual practitioner to self-monitor and improve

Definition

Medical Professionalism" is defined as:

"A set of values, behaviors, and relationships that underpin the trust the public has in doctors"

Society's Expectations of Medicine:

- services of the healer,
- assured competence,
- altruistic service,
- morality and integrity,
- accountability,
- transparency,
- promotion of the public good,

Medicine's Expectations of Society:

- trust,
- autonomy,
- self-regulation,
- health-care system value driven and adequately funded,
- participation in public policy,
- shared (patients and society) responsibility for health,
- financial and non-financial, respect and status,

Seven roles expected of the competent specialist:

- I. Medical Expert,
- II. Communicator,
- III. Collaborator,
- IV. Manager,
- V. Health Advocate,
- VI. Scholar,
- VII.Professional,



Medical Professionalism in the New Millennium: A Physician Charter

Three fundamental principles:

- I. Primacy of patient welfare,
- II. Patient autonomy,
- III. Social justice,

& A total of 10 professional responsibilities

Medical Professionalism Project, 2002 Developed by the American Board of Internal Medicine, the American College of Physicians, and the European Federation of Internal Medicine

1. Commitments to "professional competence":

Maintaining:
 medical knowledge

clinical skills

• team skills

2. Commitments to "honesty with patients"

- Completely informing patients
- Empowering them to make decisions about their therapy
- Promptly disclosing medical errors that have occurred to patients

3. Commitments to "patient confidentiality"

- Applying safeguards to the disclosure of patient information
- Especially important given the widespread use of electronic information and the availability of genetic information

Commitments to "maintaining appropriate relations with patients"

- Not exploiting patients for:
 sex
 - financial gain
 - other private purposes

5. Commitments to "improving quality of care"

- Maintaining clinical competence, and working with colleagues to:
 - reduce medical errors,
 - increase patient safety,
 - minimize overuse of health care resources,
 - optimize the outcomes of care

6. Commitments to "improving access to care"

- **Reducing barriers** to health care,
- Promoting equity through the promotion of public health and preventive medicine, and public advocacy

7. Commitments to "a just distribution of finite resources"

 Developing guidelines for cost-effective care, and avoiding superfluous tests and procedures

8. Commitments to "scientific knowledge"

- Promoting research
- Upholding scientific standards
- Creating new knowledge

9. Commitments to "maintaining trust by managing conflicts of interest"

 Disclosing to the public any relationships that may exist with for-profit industries such as pharmaceutical companies

10. Commitments to "professional responsibilities"

To work collaboratively to

- maximize patient care,
- be respectful of one another,
- participate in the processes of self-regulation, including remediation and discipline of physicians failing to meet professional standards
- engage in internal assessment and accepting external scrutiny of all aspects of their professional performance

Professionalism in Patient Care



Behavioral Statements

- Examples of Exemplary Professional Conduct
- Examples of Lapses in Professional Conduct
- Behaviors That Warrant Immediate Intervention

Examples of Exemplary Professional Conduct

- Respect for patients and families, including appropriate verbal and nonverbal communication
- Maintains comprehensive, timely, legible medical records and correspondence
- Communicates collaboratively with colleagues and all health care providers, patients, and families to provide the best care for each patient

Examples of Exemplary Professional Conduct ...

- Demonstrates commitment to ongoing professional development through attendance at conferences and consulting medical literature
- Responds to constructive feedback by improving behavior and/or skills

Demonstrates appropriate boundaries for patient relationships

Examples of Lapses in Professional Conduct

- Provides unsupervised care of a patient without previous experience or training in the appropriate skills
- Provide treatment that is inconsistent with best practice
- Documents information that does not accurately describe the care provided
- Fails to ensure that patient records are legible

Examples of Lapses in Professional Conduct ...

- Fails to consult a supervisor or a clinician who is more experienced in caring for the problems being confronted
- Provides preferential treatment of patients or families to the detriment of others
- Fails to apologize for discourtesy or for errors in treatment or judgment
- Fails to respond to a request by the family or by other professional to provide care for a patient for whom s/he is responsible

Behaviors That Warrant Immediate Intervention

- Exhibits repeated behaviors that exemplify lapses in professional conduct despite feedback
- Willfully misrepresents clinical data in communication with other health care providers
- Willfully fails to ensure appropriate transfer of patient information such that patient welfare is put at risk

Behaviors That Warrant Immediate Intervention ...

- Becomes involved in illegal activities
- Participates in physical or verbal abuse toward colleagues, staff, patients, or family members
- Engages in sexual misconduct or violates appropriate patient-physician boundaries

Professionalism with Physician Colleagues and other Health Professionals

As a Leader of a Team

- Avoid abusing any power that may come with the title "physician"
- Use a leadership position to guide and facilitate team dynamics
- Balancing supervision with independent decision-making is critically important for the safety of patients and the developmental growth of learners

As a Leader of a Team ...

> It is important to set **an example for others**

Comes the added responsibility of teaching and evaluating colleagues

Accountability

- It begins with self-awareness
- It is necessary for continued professional development.
- Physicians need to demonstrate respect for other physicians, across all disciplines.
- Negative comments made about a specialist or a referring physician diminishes the professionalism of all physicians.

Accountability ...

- Professional responsibility does not stop with one's own practice.
- Physicians are accountable for each other.
- Whenever possible this should be addressed with the individual.
- Because of the hierarchical nature of medicine, there should be a "safe" process for reporting unprofessional behaviors of more senior colleagues so as not to put residents in the uncomfortable position of addressing these issues directly.

Behavioral Statements

- Examples of Exemplary Professional Conduct
- Examples of Lapses in Professional Conduct
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Examples of Exemplary Professional Conduct

- Follows institutional policies and procedures
- Accepts feedback from others and develops goals for improvement
- Works collaboratively and cooperatively as a member of a health care team
- Provides appropriate guidance and help to team members when entrusted with supervisory responsibilities

Examples of Exemplary Professional Conduct ...

- Takes on extra work, when appropriate, to help the team
- When supervising, ensures the safety of patients by not allowing team members to go beyond their limits of knowledge and skill in delivering care
- Accepts the responsibility of teaching colleagues by developing the knowledge base, skills, and attitudes necessary to be a competent teacher

Examples of Exemplary Professional Conduct ...

- Gives appropriate feedback to peers
- Arrives on time for scheduled activities and appointments
- Accepts responsibility for assigned coverage duties or, in the event of an emergency, arranges appropriate coverage

Addresses lapses in professionalism or reports them to appropriate authority

Examples of Lapses in Professional Conduct

- Disregards feedback from others that would be helpful in setting learning goals
- Fails to notify supervisors of inability to work in a timely manner

Examples of Lapses in Professional Conduct ...

- Does not always distribute work assignments in a way that is fair to all team members
- Avoid responsibility to negotiate conflict among team member
- Ignores the opportunity to acknowledge and incorporate the expertise of other team members in enhancing patient care

Examples of Lapses in Professional Conduct ...

- Does not expend the effort to acquire knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are necessary to demonstrate competence as a teacher
- Ignores responsibility to address or report lapses of professionalism
- Fails to engage in critical self-reflection

Behaviors That Warrant Immediate Intervention

- Exhibits repeated behaviors that exemplify lapses in professional conduct despite feedback
- Engages in prejudicial behavior by favoring particular colleagues on the basis of culture, beliefs, race, gender, sexual orientation, or religion
- Leads through humiliation tactics or harassment

Stress & Its Impact on Professionalism



Stress & Its Impact on Professionalism

- Prevalence of burnout is significant among residents, ranging from 55-76 %
- Professional behavior is particularly threatened during times of burnout
- Stress caused by a combination of factors including sleep deprivation, the pressures of the work environment, the vulnerabilities of residents inherent in the training process, and the acuity and complexity of patients

Behavioral Statements

- Examples of Exemplary Professional Conduct
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Examples of Exemplary Professional Conduct ...

- Maintains poise during difficult interactions
- Confidential reporting of impaired professionals within their institution
- Balances personal and professional commitments by discharging professional responsibilities effectively to another practitioner so as to provide continuous and high-quality patient care

Examples of Lapses in Professional Conduct

- Communicates with colleagues in a hurried or incomplete manner regarding a patient
- Ignores a colleague's obvious distress or impairment
- Fails to ask for help when too fatigued to complete work

Behaviors That Warrant Immediate Intervention

- Exhibits repeated behaviors that exemplify lapses in professional conduct despite feedback
- Behaves in a disruptive manner leading to a hostile workplace environment as evidenced by multiple complaints from team members
- Practices with an impairment and is unwilling to seek help or treatment

Behaviors That Warrant Immediate Intervention

 Fails to meet professional obligations (duty to a patient) on the basis of an unresolved conflict between personal and professional responsibilities

Professionalism & Society



Behavioral Statements

- Examples of Exemplary Professional Conduct
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Examples of Exemplary Professional Conduct

- Advocates for patients
- Provides a high standard of care for patients of diverse backgrounds
- Works at all levels to promote access to care
- Recommends care that is mindful of cost and limited resources
- Conducts or supports the ethical conduct of research and other scholarly activities

Examples of Lapses in Professional Conduct

- Demonstrates prejudicial behavior based on race, ethnicity, religion, disability, gender, age, socioeconomic status, or lifestyle
- Intentionally distorts or misrepresents medical evidence in the development of practice guidelines or medical policies

Examples of Lapses in Professional Conduct ...

- Accepts gifts from industry or patients/families with an implied or explicit outcome that changes patient care
- Fails or refuses to participate in advocacy for the legitimate needs of patients
- Refuses to seek legitimate support for patients and families, such as in gaining access to needed resources

Behaviors That Warrant Immediate Intervention

- Exhibits repeated behaviors that exemplify lapses in professional conduct despite feedback
- Falsifies research data in any public presentation or publication of that research
- Fails to obtain approval or consent for research

Behaviors That Warrant Immediate Intervention ...

- Coerces any patient participation as a subject in research in any way
- Fails or refuses to participate in the legal process designed to protect the welfare of patients and their families
- Fails as an opinion leader to disclose relationships to industry

Professionalism Beyond Residency



Professionalism Beyond Residency

- Professionalism itself is not a competency to be achieved.
- It is a developmental process that continues throughout the life of a physician.
- Each and every day, in each encounter and at every decision-making point, the physician must confront the issue of the ideal professional behavior and try to achieve that ideal.

Professionalism Beyond Residency

- Professionalism should not be focused just on the very unusual and serious unprofessional behaviors that are demonstrated by a few.
- Although we begin to teach and shape professional behavior in medical school and during residency and fellowship training, the lesson is never fully learned.
- Residents need to self-monitor their behavior

How can you find support for your professionalism?

- Find a mentor
- Discussing issues, problems, and positive and adverse events with a mentor is helpful in monitoring professionalism

Behavioral Statements

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Examples of Exemplary Professional Conduct

- Constructs and participates in a lifelong learning plan
- Participates in CME activities
- Participates in community-based patient advocacy activities
- Completes charts, reference letters, and patient forms in a timely fashion
- Continually strives to improve care

Examples of Lapses in Professional Conduct

- Promotes the business of medicine above duty to patients
- Conducts practice without regard to monitoring quality or safety
- Continues to care for patients the same way that s/he was taught during residency

When a Resident Is Not Meeting Expectations Related to Professionalism

When a Resident Is Not Meeting Expectations Related to Professionalism

- One of the most challenging situations for a program director
- Interpersonal stress, institutional and program upheaval, and occasionally legal entanglements
- To determine the weight of the infraction and to chart a course of action

Some suggested guidelines

- To say a few words about documentation
- To document the conversations, meetings, and actions
- The documentation should be placed in a separate and non-discoverable file

Some suggested guidelines ...

- A single lapse could be considered part of a resident's developmental process
- Serious professional problems will require a notation on credentialing forms
- Program director may want to meet with a resident who is having trouble in the presence of a third party such as a chief resident or assistant program director.
- This may be necessary for the program director's own protection.

What Actions May Be Taken

- Counseling
- Remediation
- Leave of Absence

Counseling

- Lapses in professional behavior are often the result of stress, anxiety, depression, and exhaustion.
- The first course of action may be to try to identify any condition and to see if they can be alleviated or at least diminished.

Remediation

- May want to establish a contractual remediation plan
- A plan would specify tasks or criteria that the trainee must fulfill before returning to a position of good standing within the program

Leave of Absence

- It may be necessary to recommend or even enforce a leave of absence
- When behaviors fall to a level that may be harmful to the trainee or potentially to a patient
- A leave requires that the trainee seek the kind of help that s/he needs in order to return safely to work

What Constitutes Egregious Action

- Willful misrepresentation of clinical data
- Providing care while under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- Involvement in illegal activity
- Physical or verbal abuse directed toward patients, families, colleagues, or staff
- Sexual misconduct or violation of appropriate physician-patient boundaries

What Constitutes Egregious Action

- Prejudicial behavior
- Failing to notify supervisors of inability to work
- Falsification of research data
- Failure to disclose ties to industry
- Coercion of a patient to join a research study
- Refusal to participate in a legal process designed to protect the welfare of patient

Consideration of Context and Pattern of Behavior

- Whether the lapse is a single event or part of a pattern of behavior.
- There is clearly a gradation in the seriousness of offenses.
- Consideration can be given to the meaning of that episode for the individual trainee and the program.
- The program must articulate what constitutes acceptable and clearly unacceptable behaviors.

When Context Does Not Matter

- There will be some instances in which absolute legal and ethical standards have been breached and which require that action be taken regardless of context or pattern of behavior.
- Such acts might include physical assault, sexual misconduct, and harm of patients or their families.

What to Do About It

- Consultation
- Documentation
- Physician Impairment Program
- Involvement of Law Enforcement
- Notification of the National Board

Teaching Methods of Professionalism



Teaching

- Almost everything that a medical student or physician needs to know about professionalism should have been learned from teachers and parents during elementary school.
- Ultimately, the single most effective method of teaching professionalism is modeling of appropriate behavior by faculty members

Role modeling in three levels

- I. Formal
- **II.** Informal (unspecified, predominantly ad hoc and highly interpersonal form of teaching and learning that takes place among and between faculty and students) III. Hidden curriculum (set of influences that function at the level of organizational and culture)

Measuring Professionalism



Measuring Professionalism

• There is much debate over whether professionalism is a trait or a state.

Summative vs. Formative

- The National Board asks for a summative assessment of professionalism
- Professionalism during residency will be formative
- These assessments ought to come from multiple evaluators in multiple settings
- Combined with self-assessment
- These evaluations provide important feedback to foster residents' professional development

Tools

- Recent reviews of tools available to assess professionalism reveal few robust tools with good reliability or validity.
- A number of tools have promise:
 - I. critical incidents,
 - II. peer assessment,
 - III. a professionalism mini-evaluation exercise (P-MEX),
 - IV. multisource assessment instruments (360)
- Not recommend the use of the global, end-ofrotation evaluations as a primary tool for measuring professionalism

Lynch et al., 2004; Veloski et al., 2005;

Critical Incidents

- Critical incidents can serve as a window into the professionalism of residents professionalism.
- Some programs have a specific Praise/Early Concern Card that can be completed by faculty or peers to provide written documentation of a critical event.
- Notation of these incidents could also be specifically requested on the global monthly evaluation form.

Critical Incidents ...

- If the critical incident is positive, the resident should receive appropriate positive feedback to indicate that the program values this behavior.
- If it is a negative incident, the resident should receive specific feedback and have a chance to address it with the program director.
- In either case, the resident should have the opportunity to reflect on the event.

Critical Incidents ...

- If programs wish to incorporate critical incidents, they need to develop a consensus and culture among the faculty to support their use.
- Faculty development should include:
 - I. identifying for faculty the behaviors, both positive and negative, that should be reported,
 - II. encouraging faculty to document the behavior of residents, especially if an incident is negative.

Peer Assessments

- Peers often have a distinct perspective on professional behavior because they can observe and provide feedback on professional attributes such as conscientiousness, respect for patients and health professionals, effective communication, and acceptance of responsibility.
- Peer assessments have been used very successfully in a number of medical schools

Peer Assessments ...

- A peer assessment system must be:
 - 100% anonymous,
 - feedback should occur immediately,
 - the focus should be equally on unprofessional and professional behaviors,
 - data should be used formatively to reward exemplary behavior and to address repetitive negative lapses.
- It may be helpful to have residents participate in defining the items that should be included on the assessment instrument.

Peer Assessments ...

- Research on the reliability and validity of peer assessments indicates that between 6 and 11 peer assessments are necessary to achieve a reliability coefficient of 0.7
- There is good support for face, content, construct, and predictive validity
- Most studies indicate that peer assessments address unique aspects of professional behavior

Professionalism Mini-Evaluation Exercise

- The Professionalism Mini-Evaluation Exercise (P-MEX) is a promising new tool developed by educators at McGill University.
- It is based on the successful mini-clinical examination tool (mini-CEX) developed by the American Board of Internal Medicine.
- Consists of 24 items designed to assess professional behaviors

Professionalism Mini-Evaluation Exercise

- Evaluations from 10–12 raters result in a reliability coefficient of 0.8, but the confidence intervals were small enough for most evaluation purposes with as few as 6–8 raters
- Qualitative evaluation has also suggested that this tool can stimulate reflection on behavior

Multi Source Assessment

- A multisource assessment collects feedback from several different types of raters (eg, patients, peers, nurses, clerks, supervising physicians)
- It is an ideal way to include the patient's voice in the assessment of residents.
- The preferred format for multisource evaluations is a core set of items evaluated by all raters, along with other items that might be answered by selected groups of evaluators.

Multi Source Assessment

Multisource assessments are well-suited to evaluating professionalism across all domains: in clinical care, in the work environment, and in society

Need for Multiple Perspectives?

- Nurses rated residents lower than Attendings (p<0.05) on
 - respecting staff (69% vs 97%),
 - accepting suggestions (56% vs 82%),
 - teamwork (63% vs 88%),

- being sensitive and empathetic (62% vs 85%),
- respecting confidentiality (73% vs 97%),
- demonstrating integrity (75% vs 92%),
- demonstrating accountability (67% vs 83%).
- Attendings often noted they could not assess some areas well
- Nurses rated residents higher than Attendings (p<0.05) on
 - anticipating post-discharge needs (46% vs 25%) and
 - effectively planning care (52% vs 33%)

Brinkman 2006

Multi Source Assessment

- Because of the complexity of distributing, collecting, and analyzing these instruments, electronic systems are recommended by most assessment experts.
- The advantage of this tool is that several perspectives can be obtained and the formative feedback can be useful for residents.

Multi Source Assessment

- One disadvantage is that a large number of evaluations is required to provide a reliable measure of performance.
- A classic study indicated that 15 or more patient evaluations

Woolliscroft et al., 1994;

Conclusion

- Medical Professionalism is defined as a set of values, behaviors, and relationships that underpin the trust the public has in doctors
- It is a developmental process that continues throughout the life of a physician.
- The physician must confront the issue of the ideal professional behavior in each encounter and at every decision-making point each and every day

Conclusion ...

- The single most effective method of teaching professionalism is modeling of appropriate behavior
- Multisource assessments are well-suited to evaluating professionalism across all domains
- Professionalism is a Missing Link in Teaching & Assessment

What's your opinion?

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