Curriculum Development
Centers Program

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Health Information Technology

Component 16- Professionalism/Customer Service in the Health Environment

Unit 8- Ethical and Cultural Issues Related to
Communication and Customer Service
Lecture 8a-Ethical Issues

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Learning Objectives

- Define ethics and ethical dilemmas
- Describe the difference between ethics and codified law
- Discuss the utilitarian, individualism, moral-rights, and justice approaches to ethical decision making
- Describe the role of the medical ethics committees

What are Ethics?

- Code of moral principles and values
- Provide standards for good and bad behavior
- Influence decision making with respect to what is "right" and what is "wrong"
- Biomedical ethics
  - Ethics applied to health care and medicine

Ethics vs Codified Law

- Codified law represents standards that have been written into the legal system
  - Appropriate behavior prescribed by law
- Ethics based on shared principles and values
  - Behavior prescribed by social standards

Ethical Dilemma

- An ethical dilemma is when each alternative choice has some undesirable consequence
- Conflict between health professional's beneficence and patient's autonomy
- Conflict between the needs of the individual and the organization, or between the organization and society

Approaches in Ethical Decision Making

- Utilitarian approach
- Individualism approach
- Moral-rights approach
- Justice approach

Daft R.L. Management. Mason (OH): South-Western Cengage Learning; 2008.

Approaches in Ethical Decision Making

- Utilitarian approach
  - What results in the greatest good for the largest number of people?

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Approaches in Ethical Decision Making

- Individualism approach
  - What is in the best long-term interest of the decision maker?

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Approaches in Ethical Decision Making

- Moral-rights approach
  - What will protect the rights of the individuals affected by the decision?

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Approaches in Ethical Decision Making

- Justice approach
  - What is the best decision based on standards of equity, fairness and impartiality?
  - Distributive justice
  - Procedural justice

Medical Ethics Committees

- An interdisciplinary group charged with addressing some of the most difficult ethical problems faced by health care professionals
- Major roles
  - Education
  - Policy
  - Case consultation

Summary

- Ethics are based on shared principles and values that guide our behaviors and decision making
- Ethics can aid us in addressing ethical issues for which there is no codified law
- Ethical decision making should consider all the potential consequences for all the parties involved

Summary

- There are 4 different approaches to ethical decision making: utilitarian, individualism, moral-rights, and justice
- The medical ethics committee has an important role in addressing complex ethical decisions

References

Daft R.L. Management. Mason (OH): South-Western Cengage Learning; 2008.