


Medical Ethics is the study of moral values and judgments as they apply to medicine.

Hippocrates



The Hippocratic Oath is the original document on Ethics and related to medical practice. It was attributed to Hippocrates in antiquity. The Oath is rarely used in its original form today but it serves as a foundation for similar oaths and laws that define good medical practice and morals. Such derivatives are regularly taken today by medical graduates about to enter medical practice.

Hippocrates was a Greek physician and is considered one of the most important figures in the history of medicine. He is often referred to as the *Father of Medicine*.

The 4 principals of ethics

Respect for autonomy: respecting the decision-making capacities of autonomous persons; enabling individuals to make reasoned informed choices.

Beneficence: this considers the balancing of benefits of treatment against the risks and costs; the healthcare professional should act in a way that benefits the patient.

Non maleficence: avoiding the causation of harm; the healthcare professional should not harm the patient. All treatment involves some harm, even if minimal, but the harm should not be disproportionate to the benefits of treatment.

Justice: distributing benefits, risks and costs fairly; the notion that patients in similar positions should be treated in a similar manner.

