



VARIOUS ASPECT OF ETHICAL MEDICAL PRACTICE: A REVIEW BASED ON AYURVEDA SCIENCE

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ABSTRACT

Patients always seek for the quality treatment from his/her doctor. The basic tool of good medical practice involves professional competence, healthy relationships with patients and conductance of good ethical practice. The regulatory agencies composed “Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct” which is updated time to time. The guideline for Ayurvedic practice protect right of doctors as well as patient. The guideline of Ayurveda practice included information regarding how to practice with in confined regimen of standard protocol, it is very essential for a medical practitioner to follow ethical behavior since medical practice directly dealt with the health of human being. There are many ethical issue related to the medical profession adapted universally. *Ayurveda* the traditional science of Indian medical system also prescribed ethical code for the medical practice but yet to be recognized; thus there is a need to look at the ethical conductance of ayurveda practice to maintain quality of Ayurveda profession.

KEYWORDS: *Ayurveda*, Ethics, Medical Practice, Patients, *Pariksha*, *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Maitri*, *Yasha*.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda of serving to the mankind from many years and the ancient science of medicine were completely based on principle of *Ayurveda*. The *Ayurveda* encompassed information from all sources including plant, animal and others. The ethical conduct in medical practice was based on from the beginning of *Ayurveda* practice (*kala* of *Kautilya's Arthasastra*). The surgical and other non invasive treatment procedures were developed from the time of *Buddha* and mentioned in *Sushruta's*, the diminish period of *Ayurveda* begin from the ninth century when modern medical approached of treatment ruled the market. The need of ethical conductance strongly recommended not in modern medical science (allopath)

but also in traditional system of medicine like *Ayurveda*. This article described various aspects of ethical practice and its importance especially in the field of *Ayurveda*. The educational system of medical practices trained students to practice in a discipline way and only after careful assessment of his/her competence and suitability. The ethical code of medical practice suggests doctors to be loyal, non-violent, self discipline, vigilant humble, caring and consider patient health as prime goal. The *Ayurvedic* practitioner must maintain their professional standards, should take care of self development in terms of knowledge and skills along with developments of *Ayurveda* and health science ¹⁻⁵.

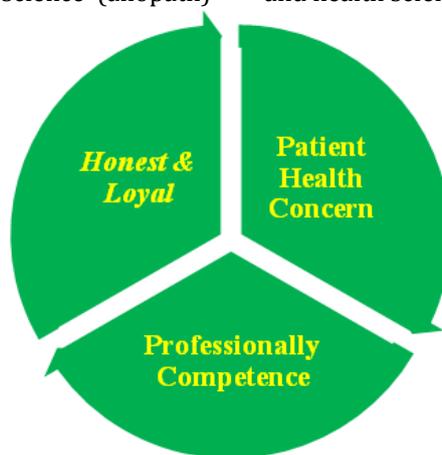


Figure 1. Basic Pillar of Ethical Medical Practice

Ayurveda Perspective of Ethical Medical Practice

The *Ayurveda* science mentioned various principles which should be applied professionally to ensure public health as prime concern. *Ayurveda* suggest medical practitioner to consider patients needs first. The Ethics Committee for guidance advice their member time

to time regarding to follow guideline strictly. The disciplinary consideration of *Ayurveda* practices encompasses all rules and regulation which maintain dignity and decorum of medical profession; to preserve not only patient right but doctors also. The ancient

literature of *Ayurveda* science emphasized fundamental of *Swasthavritta* for each and every human being, the prime focus of an *Ayurvedic* physician should involve treatment of patient considering his/her economic wealth using appropriate medicine along with proper advocacy for complete physical and mental relief. The quality standards of medical practice through ethical conductance help practitioner to care his/her patient in all way and this approach ensure patients trust towards their doctors which is very essential for doctor-patient relationship and patient well being. The *Ayurvedic* practitioner must be aware regarding rules and regulations related to the *Ayurvedic* practice. *Ayurvedic* practitioner need to follow the provisions of all health and safety related issue along with medical and pharmaceutical legislation. An *Ayurvedic* practitioner must be updated time by time regarding any modification/amendment in rules and regulations of medicinal field. *Acharya Sushruta* mentioned that, physician must be aware about the conceptual understanding of medical science along with allied science. The consultation with colleagues regarding serious cases also comes in good conductance of medical practice which also boosts knowledge and skills thus lead overall development. As per basic principles of *Ayurveda* the self respect and respect of medical profession is very essential for medical practitioner to be a good physician. *Ayurveda* also emphasized under ethical conductance that an *Ayurvedic* practitioner must consider his/her health and well being primarily alongside patient's health²⁻⁴.

Responsibilities and Ethics for medical practitioner:³⁻⁷

Sushruta provides guidelines for being medical professional; a person become physician when he/she completed study, training and other essential formalities of medical practice. Physician must need to be aware regarding the various approaches of diagnosis, treatment, effect & side effect of medicine and regulatory requirements. A medical professional should be updated time by time by practical knowledge and training. It is also very important to take prior permission from authorized body before starting medical practice. It is also suggested that maintenance of ideal personality is very important for physician by; proper hair & nail cut, bathing regularly, wearing clean & white cloths and keeping mind calm.

There are some other ethics related to medical profession:

- Should consider well-being of as prime goal.
- Attentive and respectful towards patients.
- Should not confine with time limit when treating patient.
- Discuss with patient regarding line of treatment.
- Consider autonomy of patients and support patient choice also.
- Personal beliefs should not involve in treatment protocol.
- Should not disclose confidential information of patient publically.
- Be professionally competence.
- Should not hesitate to refer patient if conditions are not under control.
- Honest and loyal towards patient well being.

- Should treat patient irrespective to the nationality, religion, culture, race, sex, disability, social standing and politics.
- Should consider philosophy and principles of traditional *Ayurveda* while setting line of treatment.
- Should not put burden of unnecessary investigation if not required for treatment.
- Refuse any gift, money or other attractive physical means from patient or medical representative.
- Should not seek any personal benefits from patient or others those are related with profession which may affect treatment protocol.
- Be well dressed, polite and maintained professionally.

Good relationship between Doctor & Patients in need of ethical conductance:

The doctor patient relationship based on the trust form both side, patient must be sure that he/she is getting appropriate treatment and doctor need to be sure that there were nothing to be disclosed by patient regarding his/her illness. *Acharya Sushruta* mentioned that the patient may also play significant role towards successful treatment; strong will power, awareness about the treatment, follow physician instructions are some features of good patient and these value synergist recovery process. There are few key points which help to maintain good relationship with patient; such as politeness in discussion, honesty & loyalty from both side, discussion of various aspect of treatment and respect for each other. Physician should not force patient to adopt a treatment since patient are free to choose as per his/her socio-economic conditions. The prescriptions must contain information regarding use of medicine along with time of intake. It is also very essential to deal carefully with curious patient so as to clear his/her doubts completely regarding treatment. The advocacy play significant role in doctor & patients relationship thus an *Ayurvedic* practitioner must pay great attention towards the patient consultation along medical treatment which bring mental satisfaction to the patient and early relieve. The patient complaints regarding treatment should take in a positive manner and prompt responses needed in such cases. The complaint cases must be handled with great care including complete investigational approach with previous history of patients along with other associated diseased; if any treatment regimen worked negatively then it should be accepted and rectified immediately without any delay.

Ethical conductance regarding patient consent

This is duty of physician to explain and obtained informed consent from patients if required for any clinical case, it is also essential to aware patient regarding any probable risk or side effect of treatment. It is duty of doctor to explain outcome of treatment along with its duration and other aspect. Patient reserved right to make decision regarding continuation of treatment at any time. The patient below 18 years or challenged intellectually the consent of the parent or guardian is also necessary, such type of cases must be dealt in the presence of guardian during treatment. If there is any change in line of treatment then patient must be informed for the same. Patient should not be forced to participate in any type of

clinical case until unless he/she wished for same and seeking for similar line of treatment. Conduction of clinical study also required non commercial intentions of physician and completely devoted for patients welfare and public well being. However regulatory guidelines are well established for the conductance of clinical study which needed to be obeying with all required documentary procedures. *Sushruta* mentioned that if there is a situation where disease is not treated then patient will die surely and if treated then success is doubtful then physician should discuss the condition with patient's family followed by written consent.

Ethical conductance regarding physical intimacy

The *Ayurveda* practitioner should examine intimate area in the presence of family member if patient is not feeling comfort for the same. Unnecessary physical behavior, comments on physical gesture, physical contact and urge for the intimacy should be avoided. This is become necessary for *Ayurveda* practitioner especially in the field of *Panchkarma* that full body massage must be done with the complete documentary registration process with respect of the patient and profession. Cross-gender contact should avoid if possible then allow similar gender person for the same, if not possible then cross-gender massage/contact can be done in the presence of member who patient wished to be present. Sometime patient may urge for physical relationship then being medical practitioner a physician must discourage such relationship. The ethical conductance of medical practice also suggests that the cross gender patient should not be called privately for treatment at home/room if not required and if it is needed then it can be done in presence of patient's family member. Physician should not behave inappropriately with female patient. Wearing of dirty clothes, ridiculous discussion, and friendship with despicable people and entering to the patient's house without their permission are some causes due to which physician may lose their respect.

Ethical conductance regarding commercial purpose

The advertisement regarding commercial purpose should contain actual information about professional qualifications, the services available, truthful and expertise in the field. It must not encompass religious, racist and unrealistic claims which not related to the treatment protocol. The advertisement must be free from any negative information regarding your competitors. Advertisement should not involve photograph of patient without his/her consent. It should not be extra lucrative and free from sensational information or photograph which are not suit medical profession. Qualifications obtained from abroad must contain information regarding country of origin. The medical practitioner must not take

extra fee which is ever mentioned earlier and must not be involve in any mean of commission based earning which may impart extra economic burden to the patient. Fee structure must be displayed in clinic should not risen very frequently. The *Ayurveda* also advice that if patient id unable to pay fee at a time of treatment then also medical practitioner should take care of his/her health. The promotion of medical products/equipment without any medical benefit is unethical. *Sushruta* also mentioned that if physician treat patient even if patient is not able to pay fee then physician earns righteousness (merits), satisfaction (*Dharma*), friendliness (*Maitri*), wealth (*Artha*), success (*Yasha*) and social & professional reputation.

Ethical conductance about treatment and prognosis

Shadvidha Pariksha i.e. examination of hearing (ear), touch (skin), sight (eye), taste (tongue), smell (nose) and *Prashna* (questioning) help physician for proper diagnosis. *Acharya Sushruta* described that curable disease become difficult to cure if persons is orthodox, who hide their disease and those not controlled in their senses and mind. Curable disease become worsens if not treated initially and this may destroy patient's life. It is very essential to plan line of treatment only after the proper diagnosis of disease. No one in the world is immortal and no one can keep away from death but disease can be definitely avoided by treatment, hence physician should treat the disease till patient is alive⁵⁻¹⁰.

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