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| You are working as a student doctor under a senior doctor. During a session with a patient, you notice that the doctor inaccurately diagnosed the patient, and you are positive that he is incorrect. The mistake is not life-threatening, but could cause the patient some problems in the future. You will need a reference from this physician at a later point in time. What would you do in this situation?  -What would you do if the physician gets angry at you correcting him?  -What is the role of a student doctor under a senior doctor?  -Would it be easier to correct the mistake if the doctor was a different health care provider such as a resident, a clerk, a nurse, etc.? | You are working alongside a nurse at the hospital. One day, while preparing medication for a patient, you overhear the nurse joke about an unruly patient. She pretends to give the patient the wrong drug and mocks him behind his back. Although the patient does not witness any of this, you feel this behavior to be unethical. How do you respond to this situation? What damage can be done even if the patent does not witness this encounter?  -What policies could be put in place to prevent this from happening?  -What if the patient did witness this behavior and demands to be put in a different ward? How would this change your response?  -What if the nurse was your supervisor instead? How would this change your response? |
| You are part of a buddy program at your university that pairs up new first year students with older students of the same program. You and your friends from the program have planned a bar night at the local pub with everyone’s buddy. While at the bar, you notice that your buddy seems to have taken a romantic interest to you and has casually put his/her hand on your lap. He/she seems to be slightly drunk. What would you do in this situation?  -If the first year student was not your buddy, and you returned the student’s feelings, would it be acceptable to start a relationship?  -Would it be acceptable to start a relationship if the student was not drunk?  -What are some other relationships (like the older student buddy-first year student buddy) where starting a romantic relationship may be inappropriate? Why is this? | A high school friend of yours has become pregnant and wants to have an abortion. She is still in university, and she says that a baby may prevent her from completing her studies. Her parents are devout Catholics and forbid her from having the abortion. What advice can you give her?  -Should healthcare providers who are morally opposed to abortion be forced to provide them?  -What long term effects might keeping the baby have on your friend’s life? What long term effects might aborting the baby have?  -If the father is still in the picture and wants the baby to be born, should what the mother wants override what the father wants?  -If the father is still in the picture, what responsibilities does he have? |
| You have been working at a local sports equipment store for approximately two years. Your manager has been watching you excellent work ethic and decides to promote you to a supervisory position. On your first day as supervisor, one of your coworkers who has been there for twenty years refuses to listen to you. What will you do?  -What resources do you have available to you to help deal with this situation?  -How should promotions be given out? Should they be based on work performance alone? | You are out at a restaurant on a double date with your significant other, your best friend from childhood, and her boyfriend. About half way through the date, your friend’s boyfriend makes a demeaning joke about her. As the night goes on, the boyfriend speaks more and more abusively to your best friend, and she seems upset by this. What would you do in this situation?  -What would you do if you have noticed this behavior before? Would this change your response?  -Afterwards, you have the opportunity to talk to your friend alone. What do you say to her?  -What do you think might be the cause of the boyfriend’s behavior? |
| Your professor calls you in to her office after class. She says that your exam answers are very similar to another student’s and she is giving you a zero for cheating. How do you respond to this situation?  -Who are some other people that you may be able to seek advice from in this situation?  -If you choose to accept the zero, who else besides yourself may be affected?  -How might universities reduce the incidence of cheating? | You have arranged to meet with the Dean of Medicine to ask him why you didn’t get into medical school in this admissions cycle. Upon entering his office, you find him engaged in an inappropriate relationship with his secretary. After buckling up his pants, he tells you that he will give you admission if you keep your mouth shut. What do you do?  -If you accept the offer, who else besides yourself may be affected by this decision?  -The Dean’s wife is one of your favorite professors, and you feel very bad for her. Is it okay to tell her about what you saw, or do you have a responsibility to the Dean’s confidentiality?  -What changes to the admissions process do you suggest? |
| You go hiking in Kananaskis Country and you end up spending more time hiking than you realize. The sun will set in an hour, and you are at least three hours away from where you started off. You don’t have a tent or any supplies to get you through the night other than your backpack (which contains a bottle of water, hiking equipment and a granola bar) and the clothes that you are wearing. What do you do?  -How would the situation change if you were with a friend?  -What preparation could you have taken before this incident occurred to prevent it?  -If you were a wildlife policy maker, what policies could you put place and what messages could you give to the public to prevent this from happening? | Your close friend from your first year medical class tells you that his mother was recently diagnosed with breast cancer. He feels overwhelmed by this news and his studies and is considering dropping out of medical school to spend more time with his mother. How do you counsel your friend?  -What long-term impact on your friend is possible if he drops out of medical school? If he stays and his mother ends up dying?  -What resources might be available to help your friend cope with his mother’s disease? With this school work?  -People might argue that due to the few numbers of seats in medical schools and the great need for physicians, people should be forbidden from dropping out of medical school once started. If someone drops out, that is one spot that could have been filled up by another applicant and one more physician would be produced. How do you respond to this argument? |
| You are a pizza delivery worker. The pizza shop you work at has a 30-minute guarantee or else the pizza is free. On your most recent delivery, you spot a woman bleeding on the side of the street. There is no one else around and the woman seems to be unable to move by herself. If you return to the store empty handed again, however, you know that you will be fired from the job that you desperately need to pay your tuition. What do you do?  -What would you do if the woman was injured, but there were bystanders?  -Is this 30 minute guarantee policy fair to the employees?  -Why do you think the 30 minute policy was implemented? What other options might exist instead? | “Liberation Therapy’ (LT), is a vascular operation developed to potentially cure multiple sclerosis (MS), has recently come under some very serious criticism, delaying its widespread use. It appears as though the research used as evidence of the benefits of LT used a small sample size. At this point, there are no reported deaths from LT’s use and some people appear to have benefited from it. As a healthcare policy maker, weigh the pros and cons of allowing LT to continue to be performed in Canada, and the pros and cons of waiting years for proper studies to be done.  -If a patient wants to undergo an unproven procedure, should he be allowed to do so? How would you handle this?  -Why do you think it takes so long for treatments to be approved? How might this process be sped up?  -If LT is proven to be dangerous, how do you explain to the patients who have already received the treatment why they were given it? |
| Because of federal and provincial subsidy policies and return-of-service agreements, international medical graduates (IMGs) now make up an increasingly large portion of rural doctors. As a consequence of the shortage of doctors in rural areas, many rural family medicine residency programs are increasing their quotas for IMGs in their programs. Effectively, this development is leading to a relative reduction in the spots available for Canadian medical graduates. Discuss the pros and cons of such a development.  -Right now, it is difficult for IMGs to be able to gain licensure in Canada. Why do you think this is?  -CARMS, the Canadian Residence Match Service is a service that matches final-year medical students with residency programs. Canadian medical students get first pick at their residencies while IMGs get last pick. Is this fair?  -What effect can you foresee if IMGs are treated equally with Canadian graduates? | You are a family physician seeing Jane, a 67 year old woman with a recent history of multiple fragility fractures. You diagnose her with osteoporosis and prescribe some biphosphate drugs and other pharmacological treatments. Jane tells you that she has heard some good things on the internet about alternative medicine treatments such as Chinese medicine, and is adamant that she try those things as well. You are concerned that the use of these alternative medicine treatments may have negative effects of Jane’s health. How do you handle the situation?  -Should unproven alternative medicine have any place in our healthcare system?  -Should it be illegal to sell unproven therapies on the street or over the internet? If so, how can this be policed?  -Is it culturally insensitive to pass off alternative medicine as pseudo-science? |
| You are on the committee for selecting a new Dean of Medicine. What characteristics would you look for in selecting an effective dean?  -What prior knowledge about the Dean’s responsibilities would you like to have to make an effective decision?  -Should applicants with less experience in academia automatically be considered lesser than applicants with more experience?  -Should applicants who are already associated with the university be given a higher status? | In June 2011, the infamous Vancouver riots broke out after their hockey team lost in the Stanley Cup Finals. Stores were ransacked and cars were burned. Hundreds of people were injured and sent to overcrowded hospitals. As the police chief in Vancouver, what measures or policies would you put in place to make sure this does not happen again?  -If you were the police chief during the riots, how would you handle the situation?  -There is a public outcry after the riots and the citizens of Vancouver demand that those responsible for the riots are immediately jailed. It will take time however, due to limited resources, to find those responsible and try them. How do you explain this?  -Riots can also be caused as a result of protests. Should protesters be listened to if they become violent? |
| Clostridium Difficile (C. difficile) is a type of bacteria that increases its activity with most antibiotic use, and is therefore very difficult to treat. Research shows that the most effective way to prevent the spread of infection is frequent handwashing. However, many people have flat-out refused to wash their hands in hospitals. The government is contemplating passing a policy to make it mandatory for people entering hospitals to wash their hands or else risk not being seen by doctors and being escorted out of the building against their will. Do you think the government should go ahead with this plan? Consider and discuss the legal, ethical or practical problems that exist for each action option and conclude with a persuasive argument supporting your decision.  -What sort of promotions could be placed in the entrances of hospitals to encourage hand-washing?  -How do you propose this law be enforced if it is passed? | There is some evidence to suggest that the widespread use of certain wireless tablet devices in Canadian hospitals has led to significant improvements in patient satisfaction as well as some small decreases in physician error. During the product launch of technologies such as the tablet, product shortages frequently occur, leaving some prospective consumers empty-handed. Knowing that these technologies may benefit patients in hospital, some believe that hospitals should be given priority treatment to receive devices before being offered to the community at large. Should the “first come, first served” consumer system be altered so that the orders of hospitals are fulfilled first? Who makes this decision?  -Should companies be forced to discount their products when there is a societal benefit?  - What are some of the security issues related to the use of tablets in hospitals? |
| Air Force One, the private flight service for the President of the United States, makes frequent unscheduled landings at major airports. Because of security concerns, all flights landing at or taking off from these airports are grounded in these instances. The situation often leads to several hours of flight delays for thousands of passengers.  - Is it fair that the security of an important elected official such as the President of the United States take precedence over the travel plans of thousands of his/her constituents?  - What guidelines should be followed to determine how often these delays should be tolerated?  - Does the reason for the president’s use of the airports play any part in your decision making? For example, is an emergency meeting with the Defense Secretary acceptable while a family vacation is not? Should the president be required to tell the patrons of the airport what business he is attending to? | You are the president of a student club at your university and manage a team of student volunteers. In the beginning of the year, the number of people who show up at your club’s events have been decent. However, as the academic school year progresses, you notice that the number of people who attend the events are declining. Lately, you have noticed that the advertising team is not putting in the commitment required as outlined in their role description and that is the reason for the lack of advertising. You decide to talk to them about this. What do you say? Would you remove them from the team, if necessary?  -If your team members are paid, does this change how you approach the situation?  -After your talk with them, nothing changes. What is the next step?  -From the advertising team’s point of view, how would you feel after being critiqued by the president? |
| You have just attended a research seminar with your colleague. The seminar was about homeopathic medicine. A particular emphasis in the presentation was on using minute amounts of chemicals to produce an effect. Back in your laboratory, your colleague says “Homeopathic medicine is absurd! How can little quantities, near nothingness, be actually helpful to your body? Homeopathy is not a true medicine!” Consider the role of other healthcare disciplines. How would you respond to your colleague?  -Why have you chosen to study allopathic medicine instead of alternative medicine?  -Do you think that alternative medicine should be taught in Canada? Would this possibly increase its safety if the practitioners were licensed professionals? | In the United States, there are two types of medical schools: Allopathic and Homeopathic. Allopathic schools, like they type found in Canada, focus solely on evidence-based medicine. Homeopathic schools teach a mixture of evidence-based medicine and alternative medicine. At the end of the degree program, those from Allopathic schools graduate with an MD, while those from Homeopathic schools graduate with a DO (considered equivalent to an MD). What do you think of this?  -Many MDs consider homeopathic medicine to be pseudo-science and even dangerous. How do you respond to this?  -Do you think DOs may have the same mistrust of MDs? How can we increase teamwork between these two professions?  -It is much easier to gain admittance to a Homeopathic school than an Allopathic school in terms of MCAT scores and GPA. Why do you think this is? |
| You and your friend decide to go to Joey’s to eat one day. You order the same thing, and each meal costs about $20. Unfortunately, your friend left his/her wallet at home. You decide to pay for him/her. Next week, you go out with your friend again for bubble tea. Unfortunately, your friend only has a dollar and the bubble tea costs $5. You have to pay for your friend. You work once a week and make about $40 per week. Your friend says he/she will pay you back, but has not paid you back for 3 weeks. What do you do? Do you keep reminding your friend or let it go?  -Would how much you earn in a week influence your decision?  -Does the quality of friendship you have with this person influence your decision? | It is Monday. You are organizing a community event at your university on Friday from 5pm-9pm. You also work this Thursday from 7pm-9:30pm, and you know you will be absolutely exhausted after work. The only classes you have are Monday – Thursday from 11am – 5pm.  You have a midterm on Saturday at 12pm. What will you do to ensure that you meet your responsibilities and that your exam goes well?  -What if the other people on the organizing committee are just as busy as you are and don’t feel like they can do as much as they have previously committed?  -Rank these responsibilities in order of most important to least important. Would you sacrifice the least important to give more time to the most important? How would you do this? |
| You are an undergraduate student who has decided to volunteer at very busy multi-physician clinic. You quickly discover that the clinic double books aboriginal patients. You decide to inquire by asking the receptionist and she replies, “those people never show up for their appointments.” How would you deal with this situation?  -What underlying problem does this behavior present to the patient-physician relationship?  -Would you consider this type of behavior to be racist?  -What preventative actions could the clinic implement that is fair to the staff and the patients? | Your friend that is in high school is having some social issues at school. His group of friends has mostly become "high school druggies". However, your friend does not feel comfortable in taking drugs for pleasure. The problem is that he wants to still be able to hang out with his current group of friends, because they seem "cool", and your friend wants to be "cool" too. He comes to you for advice. What advice do you give your high school friend?  -In your own life, how do you deal with “changes” in your friends?  -Your friend asks you if he should tell his friends to “stop doing drugs”. What do you say in response? |
| What do you think the difference is between being combative and being assertive?  Discuss your opinion on this issue with the examiner.  -Could you provide an example of a situation which is better dealt with by being assertive rather than combative?  -Could you provide an example of a situation which is better dealt with by being combative rather than assertive? | You wish to ban smoking around the University of Calgary campus. To do this, you plan on writing an advocacy memo to the President of the University of Calgary. A group of students who are also passionate about implementing a ban of smoking at the University of Calgary are having a meeting with you today to plan the first draft of this advocacy memo. You are in charge of running the meeting. How are you going to run the meeting and what are some points you would like to address in the advocacy memo?  -Is it fair to ban smoking in places that are unlikely to bother other people?  -Does this ban seem paternalistic? Do smokers have the right to engage in whatever behavior they want?  -If you were to impose a fine on smoking, what would the price be?  -What are some barriers that could prevent individuals from quitting smoking? |
| There is a shortage of physicians in aboriginal communities. As such, seats are set aside in medical schools for aboriginal applicants with the theory that increasing the number of aboriginal doctors will increase the number of doctors in aboriginal communities. As a result, some aboriginal applicants are accepted who would not have been if it wasn’t for their aboriginal status. Is there an ethical dilemma in this? Do the pros of increasing the number of physicians in aboriginal communities outweigh this?  -There is also a shortage of physicians in rural communities. Should applicants from rural backgrounds be treated in the same way? Should this be extended to other minorities as well?  -How else might we increase the number of physicians in aboriginal communities? | You are on a bus when you see a group of teenage boys taunting a teenage girl about her revealing outfit. The girl has cuts and scars on her body. What do you do?  -How would your response change if the boys had weapons, or if they appeared to be part of a gang?  -What if it was a bunch of girls taunting a boy?  -What changes might we implement in schools to attempt to change is behavior? |
| A recent study shows that more soldiers die because of suicide than by being on the front line. What can be done about this?  -Besides post-traumatic stress disorder, what else might be the cause of these suicides?  -What measures would you put into place if you were the head of defense? | -A 23 year old boy with a history of drug abuse and who has been jailed twice is in need of a liver transplant. An 80 year old woman who was until recently a politician and has made huge contributions to society also needs a liver transplant. There is only one liver currently available. Who receives it?  -What if the boy has a family and friends while the woman lives alone? Does this influence your decision at all?  -What if the person you chose to receive the liver can wait a few months while the other person needs it now?  -How might you counsel the patient who does not receive the liver?  -How can we increase the number of organs that are donated each year? |
| The cost of groceries per month in Iowala (a town in Northern Canada) is approximately 1.8x more expensive than in the rest of Canada due to the high price of shipping and their inability to grow their own food due to the climate there. Previous greenhouse attempts to grow their own food has failed. As an ambassador for Northern Canada, how might you try to lower the grocery prices?  -What effect might the high prices have on the families of Iowala?  -Who might be opposed to the solutions you have proposed?  -If you were a citizen of Iowala, how might you put these plans into effect? | Your terrible apartment neighbor just moved out. Your landlord finds a new one that she is happy with. When you meet him, you recognize him as a drug user from the halfway home that you volunteer at. You believe that he lied on his application for tenancy. You have an agreement with the halfway home that you will keep the information about its patients confidential. Do you tell your landlord?  -If you were the landlord, would you want to know about your tenant’s past behaviors? To what extent do you have a right to know about their lives?  -You are worried about the possibility of gang-related violence around your apartment complex. Does this change your response? |
| A 21 year old medical student in Delhi was recently raped by five men, beaten, and later succumbed to her injuries. Both peaceful protests and violent riots have broken out over the incident and citizens of Delhi call for the death of the five men. As chief of police, how do you handle this?  -What would you like to know about the laws in Delhi?  -How do you think this would be different if this incident occurred in Canada?  -You have a 21 year old daughter. How does this change your feelings? | A woman wants a circumcision, but her doctor refuses. She claims that if men can get one, why can’t she? You are the judge listening to her case. What do you do?  -What if this woman has been hospitalized for mental illness before?  -What else do you want to know about the procedure and what witnesses would you call?  -In what situations might a patient be refused a procedure that he/she wants? |
| After a long day at work, you come across a young boy crying and holding a “Hungry & Homeless” sign. What do you do?  Don’t assume anything  -What if it was a grown man?  -What if it was your uncle whom you haven’t seen in 10 years?  -What might Calgary do about the homeless problem? | The teaching of evolution in elementary and junior high schools has recently come under attack. It has been argued that if evolution is taught in schools, creationism should have equal time devoted to it. As the minister of education for Alberta, how do you respond to this?  -Should individual schools be able to choose for themselves if they want to teach evolution/creationism? Individual teachers? Should the province as a whole decide?  -If evolution is taught without creationism, as is happening now, what should be done about students who do not wish to learn about evolution due to their religious beliefs?  -How far should religious beliefs be tolerated? For example, if a Jehova’s Witness doctor refuses to perform a blood transfusion on a patient, is this acceptable? |
| A young couple comes up to you in your private practice. The woman is pregnant and wants to abort a child because she worries it will have negative effects on her work as an erotic dancer. Her husband wants to keep the baby. As the physician, what would you do in this situation?  -What if it were the other way around? What if the woman wanted to keep the baby and the father wanted to abort it?  -What if the mother was in medical danger by keeping the child, but she wanted to keep it?  -Do you have a duty to both the mother and the baby? Does one take precedence over the other? | A researcher is interested in studying altruism (the “helping” behavior in people”. She sets up an experiment with a single subject and five actors, who are told to portray subjects. The subject and actors are assembled in a room and are told to perform a menial task. Meanwhile, the researcher has arranged for a bang and cry for help to sound in the room adjacent to the research room. The actors are instructed to look up at the sound, but then go back to their task. In a trial run, the subject looks frightened and uncomfortable before returning to the task. The subject was debriefed as to the true altruistic test afterwards. Is this ethical? What could be changed?  -What physiological damages might occur to the subject?  -Because it might alter one’s behavior if they are told they are part of a behavioral research study, it is sometimes necessary to observe subjects without their knowing. Is this ever ethical?  -Does the possible benefit of this research to society outweigh the risk to this one subject? |
| Earth is about to be destroyed in one year due to a meteor shower. The governments of the world have all pitched in over the past five decades to build a giant space ship that will allow some people to survive earth’s destruction and continue the human race. The spaceship can only fit 250,000 people. As a developer of the ship, how do you decide who gets to go?  -The wealthy people of the world have also come together and built their own ship to save themselves and whoever else can pay. Should this be allowed?  -On the spaceship, what types of professionals will you need to keep society running smoothly? | A family physician keeps his patient’s records in file folders behind the front desk. One night, there is a break-in and 4 folders are taken. What should the doctor do upon discovering this?  -What measures might the doctor take to keep confidential information safe?  -What damage could the thief potentially do with these records?  -While reviewing the names of the four patients who had their files stolen, the doctor realizes that one of the patients is deceased. Does the doctor still have to advise the deceased patient’s family about the file? |
| You are a tenant at a condominium that has a state-of-the-art gym that can be accessed by a numerical keypad. Your friend, whom you have known since childhood and who is a single mother, has asked you for the key code so that she can get back into shape. What do you do?  -What other alternatives can you suggest if your friend wants to get back into shape?  -If you were a different tenant and you saw someone who is not paying for the gym facility using it, how would you feel?  -If you were the landlord, and a tenant came up to you and asked permission for her friend to use the gym, what things would you consider? | ~~McMaster Medical School currently uses an online test called CASPer to select for future students. Like the MMI, it involves a series of scenarios that must be responded to in a short period of time. Unlike the MMI, applicants are able to complete the CASPer from their own homes. Current research shows that it is a good tool for predicting future performance in medical school. It currently counts for 30% of the admission score. Should all medical schools adopt this test?~~  ~~-What security issues can you foresee arising since this test is done from home and is such high-stakes?~~  ~~-Companies have sprung up claiming to teach students the secrets to performing well on the CASPer. What advice would you give to pre-meds who are considering using such companies?~~  ~~-Is 30% a fair weighting for this one test?~~ |
| You are a professor at medical school, administering a final exam for a unit. During the test, several students leave to use the washroom individually. After the test, you discover a cheat sheet for the exam hidden behind the toilet. How do you handle this situation?  -What dangers to the community exist if the cheater is not caught?  -For a test of such high-stakes, is it fair to you or the other students to have everyone re-write the test?  -What guidelines should be put into place so that this does not happen again? | You are in a study group with a bunch of your friends for your philosophy class. The professor has assigned a difficult final paper that is worth 75% of your grade. One of your friends announces to the group that he has talked with some of the students that have taken the class before and he has brought along their final papers. He proposes that the group study them and use them as examples for their own papers. Is this ethical?  -What are the implications if you choose not to look at the papers while everyone else in the group does?  -Is this study group given an unfair advantage by looking at these example papers?  -There exists websites where students can pay to have university papers written for them. What can the government and universities do to stop this form of plagiarism? |
| -Your medical school has students fill out evaluations of the performance of their peers. You also evaluate yourself. Your results are shown below on a scale of 1-5 (5 being the best):   |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | *Behavior* | *Score by Self* | *Score by Peers* | *Mean Score* | | Takes on extra work willingly to help colleagues | 5 | 4.4 | 4.8 | | Encourages communication and collaboration with colleagues | 4 | 4.5 | 4.5 | | Manages conflict respectfully | 4 | 3.5 | 4.5 | | Displays empathy appropriately | 4 | 3.8 | 4.8 | | Listens and responds receptively | 5 | 4.8 | 4.2 | | Acknowledges limits of own knowledge and ability | 4 | 4.4 | 4.6 |   -Based on these results, what will you do differently?  -What other information will you seek to guide your development?  -How will you create an action plan and monitor your progress? | In 2007, the American Family Physician Journal published an article exploring the issue of physicians as role models, using a scenario in which an obese physician offers nutrition and exercise counseling to his obese patient. According to the author’s research, patients have more confidence in the health-counselling advice from a non-obese physician than an obese physician. Based on these findings, do physicians have the responsibility to act as a healthy role model to their patients?  -Is there a difference between physicians who have unhealthy lifestyle habits that are more visible than others? (ie: obesity vs. smoking)  -What are the limits of this responsibility?  -In 2003 in Great Britain, physicians working for the government were told that if they were over a certain BMI (body mass index), they had to lower their BMI within 9 months or be fired. Is this fair? |
| You have recently started volunteering at a homeless shelter. One day, you meet a 42 year old woman who is dying from alcohol-related liver disease. Her skin and eyes are jaundiced and she complains of severe pain which worsens with movement.  She confides in you that she hasn’t had a drink in two days and she “wants to get hammered” before she dies, but cannot get the last bottle of vodka out of her locker. You know that alcohol is not allowed at the shelter. What will you say or do?  -What if there is another woman a few beds away watching your encounter?  -How might emotion and logic interact in your decision?  -How can individuals demonstrate empathy without imposing on their own values? | You are a third year medical student doing an electives rotation. You are working with another medical student, resident and attending physician (Dr. Kerry). During rounds, Dr. Kerry and the resident make several demeaning comments to the nurses. After rounds in the doctors lounge, the conversation continues. Several condescending comments were said by Dr. Kerry and the resident about the patient management suggestions made by the nursing staff. You are bothered by the comments, but you know Dr. Kerry and the resident will be doing your evaluation at the end. Your friends tell you that you will get a better evaluation if you just fit in. What do you do?  -What is your primary motivation in this case?  -Do you see any potential long-term risks that might occur from your decision to speak to Dr. Kerry?  -How does this decision contribute to your continuing development of professionalism? |
| You are a counselor at a weekend hockey camp for 9-12 year olds. This is the first time most of them have been away from home, but they seem to be getting along without any problems. On Saturday, Adam, loud and boisterous, and Mark, quiet and withdrawn, two of your campers, start arguing over who owns a souvenir hockey puck. When you sit them down, they both claim to own the puck and that the other tried to take it from him. The camp director then enters and asks what is happening. When you explain, the director says “Just give it back to whoever owns it and come down to dinner”. What do you do?  -If the director was open to discussion, what plan might you suggest?  -What are the implications if you ignore the director and make your own decision?  -What steps might you suggest to the two boys and to the director so that this situation does not happen again? | It has been proposed that, due to poor voter turn-out, all Canadians must vote in federal, provincial and municipal elections, or face a $100 fine. As the dean of the political department of the university, how do you respond to this bill?  -What is more important: the rights of the individual or the needs of society? What is a scenario in which each of these takes precedence over the other?  -How can this balance be applied to the medical field?  -How might democracy be diminished by this law? How might it be upheld? |
| You provide full service family medicine. It is the late afternoon, and you still have four patients left to see. You can comfortably see them all and head home—You have promised your spouse that you will be home in time to attend a family dinner.  Before you can see another patient, however, the local nursing home calls and tells you that one of your patients for several years, Mr. Andrews, is failing dramatically. His family has recently agreed to a Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) order, so that if he got ill again, he could die comfortably without intervention. The family is now questioning this decision and wish to speak with you as soon as possible. How do you manage your time?  -A physician organization suggests that physicians should set priorities and balance patient care, practice requirements, outside activities and personal life. Why do you think they suggest this?  -Why is time management critical for physicians?  -What strategies do you think successful physicians adopt/ | You are backpacking by    yourself in central Africa. You  have just arrived in the next  town by train. You do not  speak the language or know  anyone in this town. You are  walking down the street and  you see this scene:  What do you do?  -How do you know that your decision is the right decision?  -Instead of being alone, you are with four friends. They are suggesting the opposite of what you want to do. Does this change your decision?  -How will your decision impact the lives of both of the individuals in this picture? |
| Consider these two    pictures that were  taken from the same  site in the Philippines.  What are these  people doing? What  other information do  you need to better  explain this  situation? | Now what do you think    they were doing?  -How does this second  photo support or change  your opinion of the first  photo?  -What are some examples  of times in medicine when  first opinions can be  misleading?  -What are some advantages to acting upon first instinct? |
| You are a medical student shadowing an internal medicine specialist. One of her patients has recently undergone a successful liver transplant and the patient is very happy about her recovery. However, when the specialist orders an x-ray, it is revealed that the patient has a tumor growing on her lung. The specialist fears that the patient may become suicidal upon hearing that her life is in danger again days after it has been saved. Should the patient be told about her new condition?  -The specialist decides not to tell the patient yet. When you go visit the patient, however, the patient asks about the results of the x-ray. Do you have to lie to the patient?  -Are there any other times that you can think of where it would be acceptable to not tell a patient about their condition? | You are the president of a well-sized company that has dozens of employees. Due to the downturn of the economy, however, the company’s funds have been dropping dangerously low. You worry that if the company stays like this, you will have to declare bankruptcy within the year. What can you do?  -What are the consequences to you and your employees if the company goes under?  -Would it be acceptable for the government to bail out businesses such as this? What if it was at the expense of other services such as roads, welfare and healthcare? |
| You and twelve other medical students are rating different attributes of a new hospital. Some of your ratings are very similar and some of them are very different. How do you interpret these results and where do you think these differences come from?  -How might this information be used, and how much weight should be put on it?  -Suppose that the hospital ranks unanimously low according to your group in the category of inter-professional communication. How might the hospital work on this area?  -How can it be beneficial to have different views on something in the field of medicine? How can it be detrimental? | You are a medical student shadowing a family physician. The physician has left you to take basic histories of patients while the physician attends to other matters. A 15 year old daughter and her mother are your next patients. The daughter seems annoyed by the presence of the mother, and tells the mother to leave the room. You talk to the daughter in private, and she tells you that she has been smoking a pack of cigarettes each day. You excuse yourself to speak with the mother about the daughter’s treatment plan when you accidently reveal the daughter’s smoking habits. The mother confronts the daughter, who storms out angrily and the mother chases after her. The physician then returns and asks your opinion on the case. Do you tell him about your mistake?  -What damage may have been done to the daughters trust in doctors?  -To what extent should parents be involved in the healthcare of their adolescent children? |
| You and your female friend are in an African country. Your friend is scantily dressed, and you notice that you are being followed by a group of men. You seek shelter in a mosque, but they turn you away. You hail a cab to take you both back to the hotel. You still have ten more days in the country. What suggestions do you make to your friend?  -Why do you think the group of men was following you? Could there be another explanation?  -Would such a situation arise in Canada? | You have graduated and are in your last year of residency. A treatment center for alcoholics is being planned a block away from the apartment that you live in. You are chatting with your landlord, who complains about the treatment center plans. She believes that “having drunks hanging around the place will decrease the property value and there will be broken shards of glass on all the sidewalks near the apartments”. She suggests that you, a medical professional, write to the developers and have them cancel the project. What do you say to the landlord?  -What are the possible negative outcomes of refusing to write? What are the possible negative outcomes of writing?  -To what extent should developers take into consideration the opinions of neighboring homes and businesses before constructing any sort of building? Does it matter what the building is? |
| ~~You work as a cook at a small restaurant, but you still haven’t received any training before being asked to start work. Recently, a customer has developed food poisoning, and he believes that it came from your restaurant. The manager has called for a meeting of all staff in a few days’ time. How do you respond to the manager? Should you meet with him in private beforehand?~~  ~~-What should be done about the customer who developed food poisoning?~~  ~~-What effect might it have on the staff if the restaurant is shut down?~~  ~~What effect might it have on customers if the restaurant is kept open as is?~~  ~~-What might be done to prevent this in the future?~~ | You are working in an elementary school. One of your students, Sophie, complains that her classmates are teasing her a lot. She tells you that she complained to her parents but they told her to grow up and not to act like a little girl. She also doesn't want you to intervene in case she loses her friends and is left alone. What will you do in this situation?  -What potential impacts can this experience have on Sophie?  -What might the staff of the school be able to do to prevent this in the future?  -What consequences do you think are appropriate for bullying in schools? |
| You are a third year medical student doing a rotation in geriatrics at the local retirement home. You have been asked to help Mr. Walters get out of bed, get dressed, and come down to breakfast. Mr. Walters suffers from dementia, and becomes upset when you attempt to dress him. He swears at you and takes a swing in your direction. What would you do in this situation?  -What do you think some of the difficulties are of living in a retirement home?  -What policies do you think can be put in place to prevent abuse towards staff and towards patients? | You are having a follow-up appointment with Sarah, one of your patients who has been suffering from flu-like symptoms for the past month. The initial tests that you have ordered have come back, and you are shocked to find that Sarah is HIV positive. When you share this news with Sarah, she becomes visibly upset and frightened as to what her husband will think. She tells you that she has been reading up on patient rights and that you’re not allowed to tell anyone else about her disease. She threatens to sue you if you tell her husband before storming out. What should you do in this case?  -Does it matter if the husband is a patient of yours or not?  -When are some instances in which patient confidentiality can be broken?  -Is there anything that could have been done differently when informing Sarah about her HIV status? |
| You have recently seen a young boy who has developed asthma. You have educated the mother about the condition, and have given them a prescription for an inhaler to reduce the symptoms. The mother thanks you and leaves.  A week later, the mother storms back in with an article in her hand that claims inhalers have been linked with the development of lung cancer in children. You are an expert in asthma, and you are quite sure that this is not the case. What do you say to the mother?  -What resources might you direct the mother towards?  -What guidelines might newspapers put in place to reduce the output of false information?  -If the mother wanted to take her son off his medication, should she be allowed to do that? | You are an established cardiac surgeon who is known as one of the best in the country. You and your colleague are talking to a husband and wife about the husband’s heart problems. Your colleague suggests that the husband be treated with oral medication. The wife speaks up about a new surgery that she has heard about that may help her husband. The couple has been discussing this for the past few days, know about the procedure and the risks, and have decided that they want the surgery. Because you are known to be an excellent cardiac surgeon, they want you to perform it. Your colleague says that he cannot support this treatment option due to the very high mortality rate associated with the surgery. The couple insists that they know the risks and are willing to accept them. Do you perform the surgery?  -Should the couple be allowed to sue if the surgery goes wrong?  -Should patients always have the last say in their treatment even if their healthcare provider disagrees with their choice? |
| You are part of a team of three residents who are responsible for an entire ward in a small hospital in rural Alberta. You have a very busy workload, but you are able to pull through. One day, Samantha, one of the residents on you team, announces that she is pregnant and will be taking the next nine months off for maternity leave. This means that you and the remaining resident will have to increase your already full workload to accommodate Samantha’s patients as well as your own. What can be done about this situation?  -Should people be forbidden to take extended leaves of absence during medical school and residency?  -Over exhaustion is a problem in residency programs that can cause an increase in medical error. What might hospitals do to counteract over exhaustion in residents?  -Should Samantha have done anything else? | You have been taking an advanced level physics course that you are doing poorly in. For some reason, two of your friends are acing the course despite never coming to class or studying. During your next test, you notice that both of your friends have their textbook underneath their desks and are flipping through them with their feet. You feel that it is unfair that they put in very little effort and excel in the course due to cheating while you put in the effort and still do poorly. What do you do in this situation?  -What are some of the consequences to your friends and to your relationship with them if you decide to turn them in?  -What might universities do to decrease the incidence of cheating?  -Would it be easier to turn the pair in if you did not know them? |
| There is an extreme shortage of rural physicians in Alberta. Due to this, many rural Albertans go without a primary care provider and are forced instead to use services such as the emergency department in larger towns close to where they live. As a result, wait times at the emergency departments increase. To try to increase the number of primary care physicians in rural areas, the government has proposed a tuition debt forgiveness program for medical students who choose to do a residency in rural family medicine. What do you think of this?  -What other ways might the government and medical schools work on increasing the number of medical students who work in rural areas? Is it ethical to favor admission for those who pledge to spend a certain amount of time in underserved populations?  -What impact on the health of rural citizens and on the healthcare system do you think exists due to the shortage of rural physicians?  -Why do you think most medical students choose not to practice in rural areas? | The Dean of Medicine at the University of Alberta, Dr. Philip Baker, was caught plagiarizing his graduation speech from Dr. Atul Gawande in 2011. In a statement afterwards to his students, he said, “The basic theme of the talk — that of humility has been overwhelmingly reinforced. I hope you accept my heartfelt apology and although you may not be proud of me as the dean of your school, please know that I am very proud of all of you.” He said he has always lived up to the highest levels of academic integrity throughout a prolific career that has produced more than 200 scientific articles, 50 review articles and 14 books. He apologized to Dr. Gawande, too, remorse the high-profile doctor accepted, according to Dr. Baker’s letter. Is this apology acceptable, or is something more required?  -What message does this plagiarism send to students?  -What should be the consequences of this plagiarism? |
| Anthrax has been a worrisome issue to the United States government due to the possibility of the disease being involved in biological terrorism in the future. As a precaution, the government has begun developing anthrax vaccines. The vaccines have been tested on adults with their consent, and have been proven to be effective. The vaccine must also be tested on children to test the vaccines efficacy in this population. The vaccine will not directly benefit these children in any way (it will only provide information about the vaccination of children against anthrax in the future), and has recently come under criticism that the vaccine may cause health problems in children. As a member of the ethics committee tasked with evaluating the project, should it be allowed to continue?  -Is it acceptable to sacrifice the health of a few people now if it means saving thousands of lives in the future?  -The children are not able to consent for themselves due to their young age. Who can provide consent for them? | You are a medical student who has been doing a research project for the 4-week options period between second and third year. The project is taking longer than anticipated, however, and will likely take up to 8 weeks in total. You are not permitted to use any more class time on the project and will have to continue the project on your own time if you want to complete it. How will you manage your time?  -What are the consequences if you choose not to complete the project? If you choose to complete it?  -What policies might be put into place to ensure students who choose to do research during their option time are able to complete it on time? |
| Dr. Cheung recommends homeopathic medicines to his patients. There is no scientific evidence or widely accepted theory to suggest that homeopathic medicines work, and Dr. Cheung doesn't believe them to. He recommends homeopathic medicine to people with mild and non-specific symptoms such as fatigue, headaches and muscle aches, because he believes that it will do no harm, but will give them reassurance. Consider the ethical problems that Dr. Cheung's behavior might pose.  -Is it ever okay to mislead a patient about their disease or the treatment they are receiving?  -Is it ethical to use placebos in medical research?  -What are the possible negative outcomes if the patients find out that Dr. Cheung is misleading them? | A message that recently appeared on the Web warned readers of the dangers of aspartame (artificial sweetener as a cause of an epidemic of multiple sclerosis and systemic lupus. The biological explanation provided was that, at body temperature, aspartame releases wood alcohol (methanol), which turns into formic acid, which 'is in the same class of drugs as cyanide and arsenic.' Formic acid, they argued, causes metabolic acidosis. Clinically, aspartame poisoning was argued to be a cause of joint pain, numbness, cramps, vertigo, headaches, depression, anxiety, slurred speech and blurred vision. The authors claimed that aspartame remains on the market because the food and drug industries have powerful lobbies in Congress. They quoted Dr Russell Blaylock, who said, 'The ingredients stimulate the neurons of the brain to death, causing brain damage of varying degrees.'  Critique this message, in terms of the strength of the arguments presented and their logical consistency. Your critique might include an indication of the issues that you would like to delve into further before assessing the validity of these claims. |
| Recently, the Prime Minister of Canada raised the issue of deterrent fees (a small charge, say $10, which everyone who initiates a visit to a health professional would have to pay at the first contact) as a way to control health care costs. The assumption is that this will deter people from visiting their doctor for unnecessary reasons.  Consider the broad implications of this policy for health and health care costs. For example, do you think the approach will save health care costs? At what expense?  -Which populations do you think may be undermined by this policy?  -Can you think of any alternatives that might reduce wait times to see healthcare professionals? | The Canadian Pediatric Association has recommended that circumcisions 'not be routinely performed'. They base this recommendation on their determination that 'the benefits have not been shown to clearly outweigh the risks and costs'. Doctors have no obligation to refer for, or provide, a circumcision, but many do, even when they are clearly not medically necessary. Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) no longer pays for unnecessary circumcisions.  Consider the ethical problems that exist in this case.  -What if patients want a circumcision to be performed for religious reasons? Does it seem culturally insensitive to deny a patient a circumcision because the doctor disagrees with the medical benefits?  -Where should the line be drawn between treatment that insurance should cover and treatment that insurance should not cover? |
| Universities are commonly faced with the complicated task of balancing the educational needs of their students and the cost required to provide learning resources to a large number of individuals. As a result of this tension, there has been much debate regarding the optimal size of classes. One side argues that smaller classes provide a more educationally effective setting for students, while others argue that it makes no difference, so larger classes should be used to minimize the number of instructors required. As the president of the University of Calgary, what do you suggest be done?  -Should the university students and staff have a say in the matter? How might this be done?  -Who else is a stakeholder in this decision?  -Cutbacks are a large problem with major universities today. Besides increasing class sizes, how else might universities save money? | The term “Gomer” (Get Out of My Emergency Room) is a term that is sometimes applied to patients who come to emergency departments for care that is better suited elsewhere. For example, an elderly patient with dementia may be better suited to a long-term care facility, and may be labeled as a “Gomer” by the emergency department staff.  You are a medical student shadowing an attending emergency physician, and you hear him call several patients “Gomers” in front of them. The patients don’t appear to know what this term means and are therefore not upset by it. Is the attending physician’s behavior ethical?  -If the patients knew what the term “Gomer” meant, what harm might result to their own health and the reputation of the healthcare system?  -What might be the cause of healthcare providers using the term “Gomer”?  -What policies might be put into place to ensure patient respect? |
| You are a new emergency physician working at the Urgent Care center in your community. Yesterday, a patient came to you complaining of generalized pain, asking for a prescription for a potent type of painkiller. You were unable to find a source of the pain, but wrote her a prescription for two weeks worth of the medication. Today, the patient is back claiming that she dropped the medication in the toilet accidentally and needs another prescription. You believe that she might be taking advantage of you and selling the painkillers on the street or using them to fuel a drug habit. Do you give her a second prescription?  -Is there anything you could have done differently on the patients first visit  -Should you alert other emergency departments nearby about this patient?  -Could it affect patient care if it is always looming in the back of a physician’s head that the patient could be lying to them? | You are the Dean of Medicine. Recently, a second-year medical student snowboarded into a bush and damaged his eyes very badly. He has seen an ophthalmologist who has declared the student to be legally blind. Because the practice of medicine heavily relies on vision, you are worried that he will not be able to provide adequate care to his patients. Should he be allowed to continue his studies in medicine, or be forced to withdraw?  -Would it affect your decision if the medical student was a month away from graduating? What if he was just admitted and hadn’t started yet?  -Most Faculties of Medicine in Canada try to be accommodating about students with disabilities. Where do you think the line should be drawn where the university can no longer accommodate them?  -When the mental and physical capacities of senior physicians begin to decline, should they be forced to retire? |
| You are a volunteer at an Urgent Care center and a first year medical student at the university. Parking at the medical school is expensive, and you are unable to pay the fees due to the amount of money that you are in debt due to your tuition. The free parking pass that you are provided for your volunteer position at the Urgent Care center looks very similar to the one required to park at the medical school, and you think that you can get away with parking at the medical school without being ticketed. Whenever you observe the parking lot at the medical school, you notice many empty spots available for people with real parking passes. Is it acceptable to park here without a proper pass?  -Would it change your decision if you knew that you would be late to class each day if you could not park at the medical school?  -What cheaper transportation alternatives can you think of that does not require you to park at the medical school? | Breast cancer will occur to 1/8 of Canadian women, however only some cases are hereditary. A gene has been discovered that, if found during genome sequencing, signals an 85% chance of developing breast cancer in life. Many years and lots of effort were put into discovering this gene. The scientists who discovered this gene want to patent it so that only they can offer gene sequencing for this gene. You are the judge listening to the scientists’ patent claim. Will you allow this patent to pass?  -Who owns a DNA sequence? Can it be patented?  -Should one company or person hold a monopoly over an aspect of healthcare? What are the dangers of this?  -Why might people want to know if they have this gene? Why might they not want to know? |
| The Burlington Northern & Santa Fe Railroad Co. was sued by workers seeking compensation for work-related carpal tunnel syndrome. Injured workers were requested to provide blood samples which were unknowingly used to conduct genetic testing in an attempt to identify a predisposition to the disease. The presence of a predisposition could allow the company to not pay millions of dollars for medical bills and disability. Why is this unethical?  -What should be the consequences for the company?  -Should potential workers be required to share their medical information with their employers before they are hired?  -What would constitute informed consent for the collection of these blood samples? By simply providing a sample for a “Blood Test” be informed consent? | From 1970 to 1981, the US Air Force screened for carriers of the recessive condition, sickle cell anemia, stating concern that the reduced oxygen levels in the cockpits would trigger the disease. A potential employee was screened for the condition and was found to be affected. Although he was about to be hired, the Air Force changed their minds when they heard about his sickle cell anemia and refused to hire him. Is this ethical?  - Should genetic testing be used as a pre-employment screen for all jobs? For some jobs? For no jobs?  -What if an effective treatment existed that managed the symptoms of sickle cell anemia existed and the potential employee agreed to undergo it? Would the Air Force’s refusal to hire him be ethical?  -Should an employee be fired for having a genetic disorder? What if it impacts job performance? |
| A 53-year-old man at a job interview with an insurance company revealed that he had hemochromatosis but was asymptomatic. During the second interview, he was told that the company was interested in hiring him but would not be able to offer him health insurance because of his genetic condition. He agreed to this arrangement. During his third interview, the company representative told him that they would like to hire him, but were unable to do so because of his genetic condition. An effective treatment is available for Hemochromatosis-- regular blood collection. Should the company be allowed to not hire him based on his condition?  -Should potential workers be required to share their medical information with their employers before they are hired?  -- Should genetic testing be used as a pre-employment screen for all jobs? For some jobs? For no jobs? | Joseph is just about to turn 18 years of age. He is both excited and anxious. No one thought he would make it to 18. In the most severe infantile form, death typically occurs in the first year of life. Joseph’s symptoms had been getting progressively worse to the point where at age 16 he was dying. At age 16, Joseph was enrolled in a clinical trial for myozyme. He began to improve and is nearly symptom-free today. However, as an adult he would be ineligible to take part in the clinical trial. Without participation in the trial (participants receive the medication free of charge), the cost of the treatment would be approx. $600,000 annually. Joseph, his parents and doctor have appealed to the Federal and Provincial governments to cover the cost of treatment. They are awaiting an answer. Meanwhile, the producers of myozyme, have agreed to continue to provide the medication for free on compassionate grounds for the next 6 months. Is this ethical?  -Why are medications that treat rare diseases so expensive? |
| Who’s your daddy? Are you related to royalty? Do you have a natural predisposition to sport? What is your risk for heart disease or cancer? DNA testing can provide answers to these questions and more. Nowadays, all you have to do is mail in a cheek swab and $100, and you get a print out of your results in a few weeks. People worry that this form of testing lacks adequate counseling and informed consent because healthcare providers are not involved in this consumer-company relationship. What do you think of this?  -What concerns would you have if you were about to send in a cheek swab? What further information do you want before sending it in?  -How might one include access to counseling in this process?  -What happens to the leftover DNA? Should it be destroyed or used for research purposes? | ~~A patient has her genome sequenced to find if she had a mutation that caused cystic fibrosis. The scientists sequencing her gene do not find the mutation for cystic fibrosis, but do incidentally find a mutation that will cause breast cancer before the end of her life. Should the scientists tell the patient about their breast cancer findings?~~  ~~-What if the mutation was not guaranteed to cause breast cancer, but just increased the chances of her getting it in the future?~~  ~~-People are worried about the lack of counseling in tests that bypass healthcare providers and are simply between patients and businesses. Why might this lack of counseling be a problem?~~  ~~-Is it too soon to offer genome sequencing to the public?~~  Possible: OPPOSITE behavior out of a feeling of helplessness |
| A woman enters the emergency room with stomach pain. She undergoes a CT scan and is diagnosed with an abdominal aortic aneurysm. The physicians inform her that the only way to fix the problem is surgically, and that the chances of survival are about 50/50. They also inform her that time is of the essence, and that should the aneurysm burst, she would be dead in a few short minutes. The woman is an erotic dancer; she worries that the surgery will leave a scar that will negatively affect her work; therefore, she refuses any surgical treatment. Even after much pressuring from the physicians, she adamantly refuses surgery. Feeling that the woman is not in her correct state of mind and knowing that time is of the essence, the surgeons decide to perform the procedure without consent. She survives, and sues the hospital for millions of dollars. Was this the right thing to do?  -Is there anything else they could have done?  -Is it ever okay to take away someone’s autonomy?  -Would a court order have made this decision ethical? | You are a general practitioner and a mother comes into your office with her child who is complaining of flu-like symptoms. Upon entering the room, you ask the boy to remove his shirt and you notice a pattern of very distinct bruises on the boy's torso. You ask the mother where the bruises came from, and she tells you that they are from a procedure she performed on him known as "cao gio," which is also known as "coining." The procedure involves rubbing warm oils or gels on a person's skin with a coin or other flat metal object. The mother explains that cao gio is used to raise out bad blood, and improve circulation and healing. When you touch the boy's back with your stethoscope, he winces in pain from the bruises. You debate whether or not you should call Child Protective Services and report the mother.  -Should we completely discount coining as useless, or might there be something to be learned from it?  -When should a physician step in to stop a cultural practice?  -Should the physician be concerned about alienating the mother? |
| A young man named Dax was in a car crash which caused him to obtain life-threatening burns. Dax half-consciously told his physicians to just let him die, but they forced treatment on him. Though he survived, he is severely disabled and argues that he should have been allowed to die. One of the physicians says that burn patients are incompetent to make decisions when they first enter the hospital because they are in such a great deal of pain. However, patients such as Dax can be in a great deal of pain for a very long time. In such cases, what should be done to determine competence, and when should this be done?  -Do you think Dax was unable to see a future for himself? Might this have clouded his competency?  -After his recovery Dax attempted to commit suicide. Should the doctors have allowed him to die?  -Is it ever okay for a doctor to allow a patient to die? | A woman was diagnosed with motor neuron disease (the same  disease that Stephen Hawking has) 5 years ago. This is a condition that destroys motor nerves, making control of movement impossible, while the mind is virtually unaffected. People with motor neuron disease normally die within 4 years of diagnosis from suffocation due to the inability of the inspiratory muscles to contract. The woman's condition has steadily declined. She is not expected to live through the month, and is worried about the pain that she will face in her final hours. She asks her doctor to give her diamorphine for pain if she begins to suffocate or choke. This will lessen her pain, but it will also hasten her death. About a week later, she falls very ill, and is having trouble breathing. What should the doctor do?  -Does she have a right to make this choice, especially in view of the fact that she will be dead in a short while (say six hours)? Is this choice an extension of her autonomy?  -Is the amount of time she has left relevant? |
| A woman, after a bout with uterine cancer had a surgical removal of the uterus. Before, its removal, however, she had several eggs removed for possible fertilization in the future. Now married, the woman wishes to have a child with her husband. Obviously she cannot bear the child herself, so the couple utilizes a company to find a surrogate mother for them. The husband's sperm is used to fertilize one of the wife's eggs, and is implanted in the surrogate mother. The couple pays all of the woman's pregnancy-related expenses and an extra $18,000 as compensation for her surrogacy. After all expenses are taken into account the couple pays the woman approximately $31,000 and the agency approximately $5,000. A few weeks before the birth, the surrogate says that she has become too attached to "her" child to give it up to the couple. A legal battle ensues. You are the judge listening to the case. What do you decide?  -Does paying the surrogate harm her and/or the child's dignity?  -Should surrogate mothers be paid for nonmedical expenses like time? | A married couple wishes to have a child; however, the 32 year old mother knows that she is a carrier for Huntington's disease (HD). HD is a genetic disorder that begins showing signs at anywhere from 35-45 years of age. Its symptoms begin with slow loss of muscle control and end in loss of speech, large muscle spasms, disorientation and emotional outbursts. After 15-20 years of symptoms HD ends in death. HD is a dominant disorder which means that her child will have a 50% chance of contracting the disorder. Feeling that risking their baby's health would be irresponsible, the couple decides to use in vitro fertilization to fertilize several of the wife's eggs. Several eggs are harvested, and using special technology, only eggs that do not have the defective gene are kept to be fertilized. The physician then fertilizes a single egg, and transfers the embryo to the mother. Approximately 9 months later, the couple gives birth to a boy who does not carry the gene for the disorder. Is this acceptable?  -Should people be allowed to select for other features like eye color? |
| A mother brings her son into the emergency room during an asthma attack. Though both of his parents work, they cannot afford medical insurance for themselves or him. They also earn too much money to qualify for state or federal aid. He is treated for his asthma attack at the hospital and he and his mother leave. Two weeks later, they return to the hospital in a virtually identical scenario. The mother will not be able to continue to pay for these emergency room visits. What should be done?  -What might stop them from seeking help at a family clinic?  -Should everyone be entitled to a basic "minimum of health care"… or to the exact same health care?  -Is healthcare a right? | An upper middle class, middle aged, Canadian man is playing racket ball when he suddenly feels a pop in his knee. In pain, he makes an appointment with his general practitioner and is seen the next day. He is given pain medication, and is referred to an orthopedic surgeon (he has no choice of who he will see). After a week wait, he is seen by the orthopedic surgeon and is told he will need surgery. Two weeks later surgery is performed on the man's knee. The physician, who is not very good, does a poor job on the knee, and the man walks with a slight limp for the rest of his life. The surgery costs the man no money directly, however, he pays for it with higher taxes. What are the problems with this situation? What might be done to fix them?  -What roadblocks exist to fixing these problems?  -What do you think is a good “middle ground” solution to these problems? |
| One suggested solution for our current health care woes is that care for the elderly be decreased/eliminated. For example, people over the age of 80 will no longer be placed on life support, which costs approximately $10,000 per day to operate. What do you think of this?  -When it comes down to it, should the few be sacrificed for the many?  -What else might be done to save healthcare costs? | A man has just been on a flight back from the Middle East and is suffering from what appears to be smallpox. The Centre for Disease Control (The CDC) suspects an act of bioterrorism and orders the immediate vaccination of everyone in the hospital, everyone on the flight and everyone in the same apartment building as the patient. Anyone who refuses is quarantined. The CDC also gives a supply of the vaccination to all cities that were visited by that airplane within the next 24 hours. Virtually everyone who came in contact with an infected person would also get the virus. Is it ethical for the CDC to force the vaccine on people?  -A woman on the flight is religiously opposed to vaccines, but the CDC forces her to have one or be quarantined. What do you think of this?  -Is it ethical for someone to refuse the vaccine?  -For more common diseases, like chicken pox, should be government be allowed to force people to get vaccinated? |
| At the beginning of her internship, Dr. Paul didn’t need to be told that it was illegal to remove organs or tissues from a dead person without permission from the family. As a Catholic it would also violate her faith. However, she soon learned that there was a great shortage of transplant tissues for persons suffering from third degree burns. Their life can only be saved if their skin is replaced by skin from cadavers. One day her boss tells her that they have again run out of suitable skin for grafts and they were in immediate need because there was an emergency operation scheduled for that same day. He told her to go to the morgue and quietly collect skin to be used for grafts in the surgery later that day. She should not talk to anyone about this. She did as he said. Discuss this situation with the interviewer.  -If you were Dr. Paul, how difficult (on a scale of 1-10) would you find it to make a decision? Why?  -How might we increase the number of organs and tissues donated? | Artificial wombs can be used to allow premature babies to continue to develop after being born. Science is getting us closer to being able to grow babies entirely in artificial wombs. Some hail artificial wombs as a great medical advance—one that could save the lives of many babies who would otherwise die or suffer lasting harm as a result of premature birth. Women would be free of the discomfort and danger associated with pregnancy and childbirth, without the legal and emotional entanglements of using surrogate mothers. However, some people are concerned that artificial wombs might be misused, and that women could even suffer diminished reproductive rights as a result of the new technology. What do you think of this?  -Right now, mothers have the right to choose whether or not to abort a fetus regardless of the father’s decision. Would this technology put mothers and fathers on the same level?  -In order to develop this technology, possibly harmful research will have to be done of fetuses. Is this acceptable? |
| The Whitaker family faced a terrible situation: their son, Charlie, had a rare kidney disease that would cause his kidneys to shut down within a few years. The Whitakers decided that they would have another child and transplant one of the kidneys from this new child to Charlie. Mrs. Whitaker was infertile (having had Charlie via in vitro fertilization), and will need to use in vitro fertilization again. After hearing the Whitaker’s case, the Human Fertilization and Embryology Authority rejected their request for in vitro fertilization, stating that it was unethical to create a human life with the express intent of using it to save another. Do you agree with the Authroity’s decision?  -Would it change your mind if Charlie needed both of the kidneys from his sibling to live?  -Should a government Authority have the right to deny or approve in vitro fertilization requests?  -Does it matter who is paying for the fertilization or the transplant? | According to rough estimates, 1 in every 1000-2000 infants born each year has ambiguous genitalia. These inter-sexed infants display various combinations of both female and male genitalia. While surgical reconstruction is not urgently required for medical reasons in most cases, the majority of pediatricians believe that sex selection should be completed as quickly as possible. In addition to the distress of the parents and others, say the majority of pediatricians, the child whose sex is undefined may experience ostracism and suffer from confused self-identity and self-understanding. Medical ethicists have recently argued that, as intersexuality is seldom threatening to life or health, the surgery should be postponed until the person who will be most affected -- the intersexed individual -- can give autonomous consent. Do you think the sex of the individual should be decided quickly by the parents, or later by the individual?  -What dangers, medical and social, might stem from choosing early? From choosing later? |
| Kevin Wright came to Dr. Robert Smith, a surgeon in Scotland, with a strange request. Mr. Wright wanted his left leg amputated below the kneecap. Dr. Smith was shocked and after examining Mr. Wright and finding nothing wrong with him, referred him to Dr. Dodds, a psychiatrist. Dr. Dodds was not able to find anything wrong with Mr. Wright and suggested that Dr. Smith not perform the amputation. Despite Dr. Dodds suggestion, and without further consultation, Dr. Smith amputated Mr. Wright’s leg. Mr. Wright paid for the operation personally, and Dr. Smith refused to receive payment. Was this decision ethical?  -What else might Dr. Smith have done?  -When is it acceptable for a doctor to refuse to give a patient the treatment that he/she wants? | Mr. Jamison suffered a severe head injury in an accident and died. Upon his death, his wife requested postmortem sperm procurement, telling doctors that the couple had been trying desperately to conceive a child. Mr. Jamison had no advance directive stating, or implying, his wish to father a child, or specifying his agreement to this procedure in case of his death. The hospital ethics committee noted that the spouse of the deceased is the surrogate decision maker, and concluded, for this reason, that the decision rested with Mrs. Jamison. Mr. Jamison's parents argued that their son would never have wished to father a child who would be raised with only one parent. Mrs. Jamison's physician expressed the opinion that the Jamison's efforts to conceive a child demonstrated Mr. Jamison's desire that his wife have his child. The hospital's social worker suggested that it would be unfair to bring a child into the world with only one parent. The hospital chaplain pointed out, however, that many children live in stable, loving single parent homes. Should Mr. Jamison’s sperm be used? |
| Mr. X has been on the heart transplant list for 5 years. He needs a heart transplant very soon or he will die. Mrs. Y was just recently added. She can live for another year or so without a heart transplant. A heart came in that was a match for both Mr. X and Mrs. Y. The obvious answer seemed to be to give it to Mr. X, but some hospital staff thought differently. According to his chart, Mr. X is severely overweight and a smoker (which caused his heart problems), and refuses to change his lifestyle habits. He may destroy this new heart just like the old one. Mrs. Y needs a transplant because of a genetic disease. As a member of the ethics board, which person do you believe should receive the heart?  -What other information would you like to know about the two patients?  -Sometimes a transplant is unsuccessful and another one may be needed with a second organ. Given the shortage of organs, should people be allowed multiple transplants? | An HIV+ intravenous drug user is dying of an infected heart valve due to his drug habits and needs a heart valve transplant to live. Unlike organs, heart valves used in transplants can come from animals such as pigs, so there is no shortage of heart valves. However, the surgery takes up a large portion of time that could be used to treat others and may be dangerous to the hospital staff due to the risk of coming in contact with the patient’s HIV+ blood. The patient has been counseled, but refuses to change is drug habits. His new valve, if he receives one, will most likely be destroyed within a year with his lifestyle. Should the surgeons perform the transplant?  -If heart valves were a scarce resource, would this change your answer?  -Who should pay for this surgery?  -If healthcare providers were put in danger by providing treatment, should they be forced to provide it? |
| A vaccination for the HIV virus is being researched. It has currently passed phase I and II trials and is being tested on volunteers who are at risk of contracting HIV. A control group is also given a placebo, and patients do not know whether they are getting the real vaccination or not. This has recently come under attack, with opponents stating that these at-risk patients might be more inclined to engage in risky activity if they believe they may be protected. Because some of these patients are receiving placebos, they have a higher risk of contracting HIV. What do you think of this?  -Why might someone volunteer for a trial like this?  -If it turns out that the vaccine only works on one age group or race, should the vaccinations be given only to that group or to everyone?  -If a private company invests millions of dollars in developing the vaccine, should they be allowed to make a profit off of selling it if it means some people will be unable to afford it? If not, how can we expect these companies to continue researching cures? | You are a physician who works in both an urban and rural setting. Recently, you have noticed that the behavior of one of your colleagues has changed. He has become somewhat unreliable, showing up to shifts and meetings late. When he does show up, he smells strongly of alcohol. He has lacked judgment in certain situations and reacts negatively when colleagues attempt to intervene. What should you do in this situation?  -Should the College of Physicians be notified? What consequences might this have?  -Who is at risk if you choose not to do anything?  -Studies have shown that doctors are one of the most likely types of professionals to develop drug/alcohol abuse due to the nature of their work and easy access to prescription drugs. What might be done to prevent physicians from developing these habits? What resources might be made available for physicians with substance abuse problems? |
| You are a family physician with hospital privileges working in a large urban clinic. Following hospitalization for pneumonia, one of your long-term patients gives you a gift as a thank you for the care you provided. The gift is a $250.00 certificate to a well-known local tailor who you know does excellent work. What would you do in this situation?  -Does it matter what the gift is? Is a gift of sentimental value acceptable while a gift of monetary value is not?  -Does it matter how long you have been treating this patient?  -How does a doctor distinguish between a gift and a bribe? | The parents of an adult child (age 23 years) come to you in your role as the patient’s family physician with concerns that they are unable to obtain information regarding their daughter. She had received much attention from the health care community as a result of diabetes mellitus and chronic pain, stemming from injuries sustained in a motor vehicle accident four years previously. She had recently become increasingly withdrawn. What could you, as the usual treating physician, tell the parents? Is there an ethical way of having them understand what transpired in your treatment plans?  -The parents come back a month later with a death certificate for their daughter, who has committed suicide. They are actively grieving and questioning why you did not let them into their daughter’s treatment. What do you tell them?  -If a patient does not expressly tell you not to share information about their treatment with family members, are you obligated to involve the parents in a treatment plan that will ensure her safety? |
| You are the training director for a residency program. Recently, several residents have come to you reporting that a physician frequently makes disparaging comments to residents and to patients about the work of other physicians. The physician’s latest comment was to a patient in which he said he would not allow a particular physician to treat his pets. Other comments attributed to this physician involved telling the residents that a surgeon is a butcher and a psychiatrist a mindless twit. The residents have attempted to speak to him about this practice to which the physician responded by saying he only speaks the truth, adding that patients and residents have a right to know. The residents report the comments appear to be unwarranted and they seem to be scaring the patients. Is this physician behaving unethically?  -Should physicians question the work of their colleagues? How should this be done?  -What effect could over hearing these comments have on the patients? | The other day, an elderly gentleman arrived for his appointment with his middle-aged son who reported that his father is becoming increasingly forgetful. The son would like to have his father moved to a facility rather than continue to live on his own. While examining your patient, you note he has multiple bruises on his upper arms that suggest he has been grabbed by someone’s hand. When you discuss with him the idea of moving to an assisted living facility, he becomes very upset and says his son wants to get his hands on his money and that is why he wants him to move from his own home. The patient seems to be alert and reasonable, and he reports that his multiple bruises are the result of a friend grabbing his arm while they were out walking. You would like to respect your patient’s autonomy to make his own decisions but have some concerns that he may be at risk. What should you do?  -How can we attempt to monitor for elder abuse?  -How can we help a patient prepare for declining mental capacities? |
| Dr. Smith is a family physician working in a small town and frequently refers her patients to a larger urban center. She has developed good working relationships with many of the specialists. This week, she received a copy of a consultation letter from one specialist to another that was very critical of the care she had provided to the patient. Although she was upset by the criticism, she felt that the physician did not have the full history, so she chose to disregard it. Later that day, the patient in question came for an appointment. The patient was very angry and reported that the specialist said that her incompetence had delayed the diagnosis and worsened her prognosis significantly. Dr. Smith was taken aback and had to spend a significant amount of time with the patient to discuss the issue. In the end, she felt that they could continue to work together; however, she was very upset with the specialist’s comments and wondered what to do?  -Is it important to be critical of your colleague’s performance? How are these critiques best made? | While working in your office at a tertiary care hospital you agreed to meet with a representative from a pharmaceutical company. During that meeting, the pharmaceutical representative mentioned a meeting in New York City where she will be discussing the release of a new product. The company wants you to attend and participate in a educational session in New York and offers to pay for your flight, hotel and an honorarium. You tell her that you will think about it and get back to her. On reflection you are not sure that this is appropriate and decide to consult one of your colleagues. If you were the colleague, what advice would you provide?  -Would it be more acceptable if the conference was local and the doctor was not paid for attending?  -Should pharmaceutical representatives be forbidden from directly trying to persuade doctors to use their products?  -Does the prospect of making a profit encourage pharmaceutical companies to continue developing new cures? |
| You have enjoyed practicing family medicine for 10 years but have recently received an offer to join a cosmetic practice. The hours and remuneration would be much better than you currently enjoy, but you are acutely aware of the shortage of family physicians that exists in your community. Furthermore, you know your patients will have difficulty finding a new physician. Do you have an obligation to the community to continue providing care? Or should you accept the offer, which will allow you to work less for significantly more income?  -The loss of doctors from rural areas to urban areas is a major problem in Alberta. What might the government do to try and encourage physicians to practice in rural areas?  -Switching specialties costs the healthcare system a lot of money because the cost of training physicians is greater than the service they receive while the doctor is training. Should physicians be discouraged or forbidden from switching specialties once one is started? | You moved to a town of 5000 to join a family practice with two other physicians. You are enjoying the town very much and find everyone friendly and welcoming. The clinic staff seem to know everyone in town and often provide you with background information about patients and their families. Your spouse teaches at the local school and one of their colleagues is married to one of your office staff. Last week your spouse overheard their colleague talking about a patient who has been diagnosed with breast cancer and he said he learned about it from his wife who works at the medical clinic. You are wondering how to maintain confidentiality in a small close knit community and what you should say to your office assistant about this possible breach of confidentiality.  -What policies might you put in place to ensure future confidentiality breaches do not occur?  -Is it appropriate to discuss a case with a non-medical professional if you do not reveal the name of the patient in question? |
| In this new scenario, you have completed a locum in a physician’s office and noted many significant concerns in the care of a large group of patients, ranging from missed follow-up of investigations to misdiagnosis and poor management of chronic diseases. You already decided not to do another locum in this practice but are wondering now if you should do something more. For example, do you have an ethical obligation to report your concerns to someone and, if so, who this should be?  -What are the possible negative consequences if you speak up? If you stay quiet?  -How much effort do you feel you should put into improving this office? Is it your responsibility to do so? | Your practice has a large number of older adolescents and young adults, and your patients frequently say they do not want any information released to their parents. Yesterday, you saw a 19-year old woman who is suffering from depression, has a history of binge-drinking and has had increasing thoughts of suicide. She reports she would not act on these thoughts because it would hurt her family, but you are worried about her. You thought of speaking to the mother but decided against this when your patient asked you not to. This morning, you received notification that your patient was brought into emergency last night following an overdose and was admitted to the ICU. You are now wondering if you should have spoken with her mother about your concerns. Did you make the right decision?  -How might you involve parents in the treatment of their children without sacrificing confidentiality?  -Is it okay to break confidentiality if the patient is in danger? |
| At your last office staff meeting, the rising cost of rent and overhead was discussed. One of your partners mentioned that he had been approached by a large pharmacy chain with an offer of space adjacent to their new pharmacy that is only one block from your current offices. The cost per square foot is half of what you are currently paying and there was a suggestion that the rent could be lowered if the volume of prescriptions from your office were substantial. Although this offer is very tempting, you have reservations about the potential conflict of interest. One of your partners is pushing to explore this option. You are wondering if you could manage the conflict by refusing to engage in any reduction in rent based on prescription volume but still take the space at the reduced lease costs. Another partner feels that this arrangement will compromise her autonomy and feels that it will look as if the office is associated with the pharmacy even if it is not. Everyone agrees that the overhead costs need to be reduced. What is the right thing to do? Can you accept any part of the offer? | For ten years you have worked in a clinic with five family physicians. The most senior member of the clinic, who founded it 40 years ago, has been a mentor and teacher to the other physicians. Over the past year, you have noticed he often forgets to do things, and his charting has declined significantly. Any attempts to discuss this with him were met with denial. The group decided to keep a close watch on him, hoping there would be no further decline to his practice prior to his retirement. When he announced that he was going to continue practicing, the group attempted to discourage him but he insisted on staying. His colleagues hold him in very high esteem and do not want to hurt him, but they are concerned about his ability to care for patients. The group met and a decision was made to approach him and insist that he sees his physician about his memory problems. No one was sure what to do if he refused, or if they continued to notice a decline in his functioning. The group wondered at what point they would need to act to protect patients. What would you do in this circumstance? |
| You are a physician with a busy family practice in a mid-sized city. Recently, three of your colleagues left the region to practice elsewhere, adding to the pressure to take on more patients. On top of this, your elderly father recently moved into the community and is demanding of your time - particularly in looking after his medical needs. You have refilled his prescriptions and examined him when he developed a cough but have encouraged him to seek another family physician. He cannot find one accepting new patients. You ask a colleague for assistance but she feels she cannot accept another patient with complex medical needs. You continue to fill your father’s prescriptions but feel uncomfortable and wonder about the ethical issues of treating a family member. What is the right thing to do?  -What problems exist in treating a family member or close friend?  -Is it acceptable to treat your father until another physician can be found?  -Is it acceptable for the colleague to refuse to take on your father? | While on call you were asked to see a woman whose labor was being induced with medication. The fetal pH was becoming unacceptable and after consultation with your attending physician you elected to proceed with a C-Section. Once the medication was discontinued, the fetal pH returned to normal so there was no urgency. You suggested an epidural be used but the young anesthetist wanted to do an immediate general anesthetic. This suggestion, as well as the anesthetist’s experience level concerned you, but you said nothing. The young anesthetist did not recognize nor know how to manage the woman’s extremely small mandible and you watched both the mother and baby die. At the inquiry you were called to testify but were not asked, nor did you volunteer, information about this aspect of the tragedy. You did not speak to the anesthetist despite having seen similar problems without consequences in the past. What could you have done differently?  -Should the anesthetist face consequences? What would be appropriate |
| You have been treating a 24-year-old man for many years in your family practice. He has an anxiety disorder and had some trouble with substance abuse in his teens but has been doing well and attending university. After his last visit for a minor injury you noted that a prescription pad was missing. A few weeks later you received a call from a pharmacy asking you to verify a prescription for 600 tablets of a potent painkiller written for this patient. You report that this is a forgery and ask the pharmacy not to fill it. Your colleague urges you to report this to the police and states this is allowed under the Health Information Act. You are very angry with the betrayal of trust with your patient but you have never reported a patient to the police and wonder what you should do.  -How much information should you give the police about this patient?  -Should you continue to treat this patient, or tell him to find another physician?  -How can doctors prevent theft from their offices? | A colleague has approached you for advice about a request he received from an athletic club to provide human growth hormone to athletes. He is wondering if there is any ethical reason not to proceed. He is aware of the prohibition by Sport Canada to performance enhancing drugs but feels that as long as the athlete freely chooses this option and is aware of all risks, medical and otherwise, then it should be allowed. What advice would you give your colleague and why?  -Does it change your response if the athletes will not be using these hormones for an advantage in organized sport?  -What examples can you think of where a competent patient may be denied a treatment or medication that they want? |
| A 40-year-old woman came in and requested a prescription for a medication that was, in your opinion, uncalled for because of her co-morbid medical conditions. She said she was aware of the risks and insisted that if she wanted to proceed with the treatment, she should be allowed to do so. Furthermore, she stated that you had no right to refuse to prescribe it for her. You have always tried to act in accordance with the tenet “do no harm” and have felt that you must make an independent decision as to the acceptability of a treatment. One of your colleagues feels that if the patient is aware of the risks then you should provide her with the treatment if she requests it. You are unsure about this and wonder how best to sort this out. What should you do?  -Does it change your response if the patient offers to pay for the drug? What if it is covered under her insurance by taxpayers?  -What are the implications of refusing to give her this medication? | Dr. Jones is an internist working in a tertiary care hospital. Last weekend, a resident came to her with concerns about a patient who was receiving end of life care. The patient’s family had been reading about the Quebec discussion on euthanasia and expressed fears that the pain relief being offered to their mother was designed to hasten her death. They were very opposed to this and wanted the resident to reduce the amount of medication given. The patient is unable to participate in these discussions and the resident is concerned that the patient will suffer extreme pain if the dose is lowered. Dr. Jones offers to speak to the family with the resident, but the conversation with the family does not go well. She approaches you to discuss any suggestions you might have to assist in discussions of end-of-life pain management and the ethical considerations associated with end-of-life care. How would you advise Dr. Jones?  -What might have been done to prevent this while the mother was still competent? |
| While at the hospital doing rounds a colleague approaches you in an agitated state. She reports that she has been served a Notice to Practitioner from the College and has been charged with unbecoming conduct. She goes on to explain that she received a letter from the College six months ago and was so busy she never got around to responding to it. She claims it was a trivial matter relating to the failure to respond to a letter from a patient’s insurance company and can’t believe that the College would charge her. You are surprised too and ask if this came out of the blue. She admits that she was sent four reminder letters but that she had more important matters to attend to - like caring for patients. When she asks you what you think about this matter you are not sure what to say. What would you say to your colleague?  -Is it important to respond to the College - your regulatory body?  -Why is there a regulatory body for physicians? | You are a family physician working in a multi-physician practice. You and all of your partners also provide in-patient care and emergency room coverage at a local hospital. The outbreak of H1N1 influenza was raised at the last staff meeting and everyone is struggling to determine how the clinic and the hospital will manage during a pandemic situation. One of the physicians worked in Toronto during the SARS crisis and spoke about how difficult this was for health care workers. You do not have any children and one of your partners suggested that physicians with young children should not be required to put themselves at undue risk. What principles should your clinic consider as they make plans to prepare for a pandemic?  -Should healthcare providers be forced to provide treatment to patients with infectious diseases?  -During a pandemic, what temporary changes or rules might be put in place in emergency rooms and primary care facilities? |
| The year is 2007; Toronto has declared an emergency pandemic situation and all signs are that the cases in Alberta (and your community) are increasing rapidly. You have two school age children and are responsible for aging parents. You work in a multi-doctor family clinic and take some shifts as a hospitalist every month. Your daughter has been sent home from school because she has been exposed to influenza and you are scheduled to do a shift in the hospital. You are aware the hospital is very busy, has many staff off sick and everyone is working to their maximum. What are your responsibilities to your family, the public, and your colleagues?  -Should healthcare providers be forced to provide treatment to patients with infectious diseases?  -During a pandemic, what temporary changes or rules might be put in place in emergency rooms and primary care facilities? | A 24-year old mother comes into the emergency department with her 6-year old daughter who is complaining of abdominal pain. The emergency department physician diagnoses her with appendicitis, and tells the mother that the daughter requires an emergency appendectomy (surgical removal of the appendix). The mother however, is religiously opposed to surgeries and refuses the treatment. She understands that her daughter may die without the surgery She tells the physician that her daughter is of the same religion as she is. Should the physician perform the surgery, or respect the mother’s wishes?  -Would the mother be able to refuse the appendectomy if it was for herself rather than for her daughter?  -Is there a certain age after which patients can make informed decisions for themselves? What factors need to be taken into consideration? |
| A 15-year old boy wants to become sexually active with his girlfriend of 3 weeks. He has been reading about sexually transmitted diseases, and has decided to use a condom. However, he feels embarrassed about asking his parents to buy him condoms, and because he is not able to drive, he is not able to buy them himself. He has come to your family clinic to get some free samples under the guise of faking the flu and having his parents drive him here. He requests that you do not tell his parents about the true nature of his visit. What should you do?  -What else in terms of education can the physician do for the boy?  -What are the possible dangers and benefits of revealing the boy’s request to his parents? | You are a first year medical student shadowing an emergency physician in the local emergency room. A 2-year old boy is brought in by his parents with multiple bruises on his body. The parents tell the physician that the boy fell down the stairs, but the physician notes that the bruises are of different ages and suspects child abuse. The physician leaves you to take a more detailed history while he makes a note in the chart and calls a social worker to the case. While the physician is out, the parents reveal to you that they have been abusing their child. They also have two other children at home that they claim they have not abused. They ask that you keep this information confidential from the physician and social worker. What should you do?  -Do confidentiality agreements prevent you from discussing aspects of a patient’s case with other members of the healthcare team?  -Should the parents be reported to child protective services? Should all three children be taken away, or just the abused child? |
| Alberta Health Services has recently started a controversial mobile harm reduction program that supplies drug users with sterilized needles free of charge. In addition, the healthcare providers who provide the needles are trained to offer counseling and can test for other diseases such as HIV. The program claims that by providing sterilized needles, they are able to reduce the risk of disease transmission that is associated with using dirty needles. Opponents of the program claim that providing needles to drug users will only enable them and waste precious resources. You are a physician on a counsel that is tasked with determining whether this program should continue or not. What is your opinion?  -Sometimes it is difficult to get heavy drug users to quit their addiction. Is this a good “middle ground”?  -What difficulties might drug users experience that could prevent them from seeking treatment or accepting it? | You have recently graduated from medical school and have started your residency program. One of your colleagues from the same residency program recently discovered a man lying on the side of the road who had been hit by a car. The victim’s condition was critical, and your colleague decided that it would be better to drive the victim to the hospital himself rather than wait for an ambulance. The physician did not protect the victim’s head and spine properly while loading him in his car, and the victim ended up suffering from quadriplegia due to the physician’s actions. Was the physician justified in his choice not to wait for the ambulance?  -Should the physician face any consequences for his actions?  -Was this a case of “life over limb”?  -If the victim had given his consent to be transported in the physician’s car, would this have made the physician’s actions acceptable? |
| You are a first-year medical student who is shadowing a physician in the emergency room. A drunken man is brought in by a police officer and the officer tells you the man was just involved in a hit and run accident that claimed the lives of a family. The officer requests that the physician insert a nasogastric tube to collect a sample of the stomach contents of the patient to prove to the courts that the man was under the influence of alcohol while this incident occurred. The patient refuses the insertion of the tube. What should be done? | A 19-year old woman is pregnant and in her second trimester. She is admitted to the hospital for a drug overdose. She tells her doctors that she is a heavy drinker and uses several illicit drugs, both of which are harmful to the fetus. She refuses to stop her habits. One of the residents on the woman’s healthcare team suggests that she be involuntarily hospitalized to ensure that further damage is not done to the fetus. Is this acceptable?  -What dangers exist in forcing the mother to stop her habits against her will?  -What dangers exist in letting the mother continue to indulge in her habits? |
| You are a third-year medical student doing a surgery rotation. A female patient has recently been anesthetized for a general appendectomy procedure. You have been talking with the surgeon about your difficult rotation in OB-GYN and the surgeon suggests that you perform a vaginal examination on this patient as practice before the operation is started. Is this an ethical thing to do?  -How else might you practice your OB-GYN procedural skills? | One of your best friends from medical school comes up to you and reveals that he has been stuck with a needle that has recently been used to collect blood from a hepatitis C positive patient. You advise your friend to visit the emergency room and his family doctor. Before he leaves, he asks you to keep this confidential. He works on a dialysis ward and will be in contact with needles every day. There is a possibility that he might accidentally infect a patient with hepatitis in the future. Do you have an obligation to tell someone about this? Who?  -What policies might the hospital put in place to prevent needle sticks? |
| Your mother calls you and asks you to come round to help with a major family decision. Your maternal grandfather is 70 years old and has been diagnosed with a condition that will kill him some time in the next five years. He can have a procedure that will correct the disease and not leave him with any long-term problems, but the procedure has a 40% mortality rate. He wants to have the procedure, but your mother does not want him to. How would you help mediate this issue?  -Your grandfather's long-standing GP advises against the procedure. What discussion items would you raise with the GP?  -Would you find it easier to make a decision if it was a stranger who was affected by this illness instead of your grandfather?  -You "Google" your grandfather's condition and information indicates a 5-year mortality of between 70% and 90%. How would you interpret this information? | The Hippocratic Oath was originally designed as a code to lead physicians in ethical practice. Sections of the Oath say,  “I will give no deadly medicine to any one if asked, nor suggest any such counsel”, “  “I will not cut for stone, even for patients in whom the disease is manifest; I will leave this operation to be performed by practitioners, specialists in this art”  “I will not give a woman a pessary to cause an abortion”  “All that may come to my knowledge in the exercise of my profession or in daily commerce with men, which ought not to be spread abroad, I will keep secret and will never reveal”  What do you think these quotes mean? Is the Hippocratic Oath outdated?  -If you were tasked with remediating the Hippocratic Oath what sections would you delete?  -What sections would you add? |
| You are a third-year medical student about to write the board exams for certification. The night before the exams, your father has a serious heart attack and is admitted to the hospital. How will you manage your time?  -How might you be reasonably accommodated if you choose not to write the exam tomorrow? What problems might arise as a result of this?  -What study habits would you use for an important test such as this to ensure success? | The Hippocratic Oath clearly states that physicians should not willingly administer a fatal drug to anyone. When an inmate on death row is executed, however, it is usually a physician who administers the lethal drug in order to ensure the administration is done as painlessly and ethically as possible. Are there any moral dilemmas in this?  -Does using physicians to kill inmates lower the moral standards of the profession?  -Should doctors be allowed to refuse a request by the government for them to perform the execution of an inmate on death row? |
| You are a genetic counselor. One of your clients, Linda, had a boy with a genetic defect that may have a high recurrence risk, meaning her subsequent pregnancies has a high chance of being affected by the same defect. You offered genetic testing of Linda, her husband, and their son to find out more about their disease, to which everyone  agreed. The result showed that neither Linda nor her husband carry the mutation, while the boy inherited the mutation on a paternal chromosome that did not come from Linda's husband. In other words, the boy's biological father is someone else, who is unaware that he carries the mutation. You suspect that neither Linda nor her husband is aware of this non-paternity. How would you disclose the results of this  genetic analysis to Linda and her family?  -What are the underlying principles that should be followed?  -What other resources might you want to explore before making a decision? | A patient with Downs Syndrome became pregnant. The patient does not want an abortion. Her mother and husband want the patient to have an abortion. What should a physician do in this situation?  -Having the child might put an increased amount of unwanted stress on the patient’s parents. Is this fair?  -If the child is born, what resources might you direct the patient and her family towards? |
| A 12-year old boy is diagnosed with a terminal illness (e.g. an inoperable brain tumor). He asked the doctor about his prognosis. His parents requested the doctor not to tell him the bad news. What should the doctor do in this situation?  -Would your answer be different if the child was older and independent?  -Is it ever okay for a doctor to withhold information from a competent patient? | A family physician became sexually involved with a current patient who initiated and consented to the contact. Is it ethical for the patient to become sexually involved or start a relationship with the patient?  -Would the relationship become acceptable if the patient in question found another family doctor and was no longer a current patient?  -Does acceptability differ with different types of specialties? For example, is it more ethical for an emergency room physician who has met a patient once for a broken bone to start dating the patient compared to a psychiatrist who has treated a mentally unstable patient for years? |
| A physician went to vacation for 2 weeks. He did not find another physician to cover him. One of his patients with hypertension developed severe headache. The patient has an appointment with the doctor as soon as he comes back from vacation. The patient did not look for another physician and decided to wait. The patient suddenly  collapses and was diagnosed to have intracranial hemorrhage. Is the physician responsible for this patient?  -Does it matter what kind of physician the doctor was? Is it more acceptable for a family doctor to leave on vacation without a replacement compared to one of the only trauma surgeons in the city?  -Does it matter where the doctor was located? Is it less acceptable for one of the only rural doctors in a small community to leave on vacation without a replacement compared to an urban physician from a large city?  -Where does the duty of a physician to his patient end? | As a physician at a local hospital you notice that there is a man with an alcohol dependency who keeps on consuming the hand sanitizer offered at the hand sanitizer stands throughout the hospital. He is not a patient at the hospital at present but has been many times in the past. Consequently, there is often no hand sanitizer for public use. What do you do? Do you remove/change location of hand sanitizer stands? Do you approach him?  -Should people with severe alcohol or drug-related problems be forced to obtain care?  -What are the dangers of having no hand sanitizer available?  -Should the man in question be banned from the hospital? |
| Is it ethical for doctors to strike? If so, under what conditions?  -What other professions should not be allowed to strike?  -If it is made illegal for doctors to strike, what policies might be put into place to ensure the doctors are not taken advantage of? | You are a health researcher at an academic institution. You have been asked to work on a top-secret vaccine that would treat biomedical weapons or other communicable diseases. Before your break through, you are instructed by the government to stop all research and turn over all materials and copies of your work to be destroyed. You know you are very close to finding a cure. What do you do?  -Do you feel that you have a right to know why the government is stopping the research?  -If the research was privately funded rather than publicly funded, would the government have the right to stop the research?  -What reasons might the government have for stopping the research that you agree with? |
| You are driving your friends to a party. The passenger in the seat next to you is rather drunk and instead of telling you where the turn-off is, grabs the wheel unexpectedly and steers the car into a sharp left. You collide with another car, and both cars are hurtled into the ditch. When you get out of the car, the woman from the car you collided with is irate and explains that she was going to a job interview that she will probably be late for now. What do you do?  -What do you say to the passenger that grabbed the steering wheel?  -Who should be responsible for the damage? | You have loaned your car to a good friend of yours while you go out of town for the weekend with your family. When you get back, your friend gives you back the keys and leaves without saying anything. When you examine the car, you notice a large ding in the front passenger side door. What do you do?  -Does this affect your friendship in any way?  -Your friend is unemployed and is not able to pay you back for the damage. What do you do? |
| You are looking out of  http://theinspirationroom.com/daily/commercials/2007/2/vw-jumper.jpg  the window in your office  and you see this picture:  What do you think is  happening?  -What do you say to the man in the picture?  -What if the man doesn’t speak English? | There is an outbreak of an incredibly contagious life-threatening disease. The disease is spreading across the country at a rapid rate and the survival rate is less than 50%. You are a senior health care administrator, and when the vaccine is developed, you have priority to receive the drug. Do you take the vaccine yourself or give it to another person? Why or why not?  -Are there any groups that should have priority over other groups in receiving the vaccine first?  -What might be a fair way of determining who else gets the vaccination first? |
| Mrs. Jones has signed a donor card indicating that she is willing to donate her body to science without notifying her husband and son. She gets into an accident and it is determined she is brain dead. The family doctor, who is on call that afternoon, reviews the chart and determines that she would be perfect for medical students to practice the removal of organs for transplantation purposes. The doctor then talks to the family to discuss the procedure and to confirm their consent. They both oppose the procedure and refuse to allow their doctor to move forward. The doctor points out that Mrs. Jones could be helping hundreds of people by educating the medical students and that technically consent has already been provided. The husband understands how beneficial the educational experience is but is too emotional to allow them to continue. The son, a medical student, refuses because he knows the bodies are not treated with dignity. If you were the doctor, how would you proceed? Why?  -What policies might be made so cadavers are treated respectfully? | There is a large debate as to whether marijuana should be legalized in Canada. Proponents of the legalization state that it will free up law enforcement resources, increase the country’s wealth since it can be taxed, put the supply under government control (making it safer), and that marijuana does not cause any health or lifestyle problems. You are one of the physicians on a board that has been created to make recommendations to the government on this issue. What do you think of these arguments?  -What might opponents of the legalization argue?  -In the United States, prohibition of alcohol was instated from 1920-1933. After prohibition ended, alcohol smuggling-related crime rates dropped dramatically. Do you think that the legalization of marijuana would result in the same decrease in crime rate?  -Do you think that the distribution of alcohol should be controlled more strictly? |
| This picture was  doctors strike  taken in Ghana  in April 2013.  What do you  think is  happening?  -The people in  this picture are  all doctors who  have threatened  to withdraw  emergency  services unless they are given welfare and a better pension. Is this ethical?  -What might be done to mediate this situation? | An editorial appeared in the Canadian Medical Association Journal, advocating that pregnant mothers not be told the gender of their fetuses until 30-weeks into the pregnancy even though it can usually be determined by ~20 weeks. The goal of this is to prevent women from aborting fetuses based on the gender of the fetus alone. Many abortions are performed today because the fetus is female. Would this guideline be ethical?  -Should women be allowed to abort fetuses based on the gender of the fetus?  -Should they be allowed to abort fetuses for any reason? Who decides if a reason is acceptable or not? |
| You work at the local skating rink as a skating instructor. One day, a hidden recording device is found in the woman staff’s change room. An investigation is launched and an arrest is made of one of the rink room supervisors. The supervisor was responsible for mentoring the skating instructors and was well-liked by all staff. A week after the incident, you find one of the female staff crying outside of the building. What do you do?  -What measures might the skating rink put into place to support its instructors in this difficult time?  -What resources might you direct this staff member to, and how might they be able to help her? | You volunteer at the local emergency department. The department operates on a triage system, rather than on a first-come-first-serve basis. This means that patients with more serious illnesses are seen first, regardless of how long they have been waiting. An irate woman comes up to you complaining that she has been waiting several hours to see a physician and that she just saw a gentleman who recently arrived get seen first. She says the man didn’t look sick at all to her and demands to see a physician immediately. What do you say to the woman?  -How might we solve emergency department overcrowding?  -A “Fast Track” system has been put in place in many hospitals in Canada. In this system, patients with minor injuries that can be treated quickly (such as a cut leg in need of stitches) are treated immediately in a separate section of the emergency department. Do you think this is a good idea? |
| You have been tasked with a group project for one of your university classes that is worth 50% of your final grade. Your group of four people has decided to do a PowerPoint presentation. During two of the five meetings that you have with your group, only you and one other member are present. During the other three, only you and the two others are present. The absent members use excuses such as sickness after they do not show up for the meetings, but do not answer their phones when you attempt to call them at the meetings themselves. The other members of your group have contributed very little to the project, and you feel that it is unfair that you are doing the majority of the work. You talk to your professor, but he is unhelpful. What do you do?  -What are the advantages of group projects over individual projects? What are the advantages of individual projects over group projects?  -What other resources might you attempt to use? | You are part of an extracurricular club that meets after classes. During one of your meetings, the club president makes an offensive joke about homosexuals. You know that one of the other members of the group is homosexual and very shy, so you know he would not speak up if he was hurt by the comment. Do you say anything?  -What duties should the club president have in terms of making the other members feel welcome?  -What might be the result of repeated stigmatization against a certain group of people? |
| You are a family medicine resident. One day, a man comes in who has been experiencing flu-like symptoms for several weeks. You perform a physical exam and take a history, and you wonder if the man could have been infected with HIV. You ask the man if he has ever participated in any homosexual acts. The man becomes angry and accuses you of being bigoted against gays. How do you respond?  -Is there anything you could have done differently? How else might you explore the possibility of an HIV infection?  -Should patients be able to refuse to answer a doctor’s questions?  -Why is it helpful to doctors to know the race, ethnic background and sexual orientation of patients? | You are a family physician working in a private clinic. One day, you overhear a patient harassing your secretary. He calls her an “Incompetent bitch” and makes several other demeaning remarks. When ask what is going on, the patient says that the secretary billed him incorrectly for a visit he had the previous week. When you look into the mistake, you found that the secretary had accidently sent two similarly-named patients each other’s bills. What do you do?  -Do you ban the patient for the harassment of your secretary? What if this isn’t his first time doing so?  -What can be the harms of ignoring abuse to your employees? |
| You are one of the only two pediatric brain surgeons in Canada who specializes in a specific procedure. This means that you must often travel around to different provinces to perform the surgery on the patients there who require it. You have been practicing for 40 years, and you decide that you want to retire. However, it will take an additional five years to train someone else to take your place as an expert in this surgery. Is it ethical for you to retire now?  -What are the problems and benefits associated with having physicians who are experts in one rare type of treatment?  -If you had known that you wanted to retire at this time, what might you have done in the past few years to prepare for this? | Sometimes during urban development projects, such as the construction of a highway, private property is sacrificed for the development. Sometimes, this means that citizens who live on the proposed development area are forced to sell their homes to the government (for what the government believes is a fair price), the homes are destroyed, and the road is built. People who refuse to leave their homes are prosecuted. What do you think of this? Is it nessesary?  -Is it okay to sacrifice the rights of individuals for the good of the community?  -What troubles, emotional and financial, might evicted families face?  -Is there a fairer way that they government can continue urban development? Keep in mind that it is not always possible to plan development so that it falls only on public property. |
| You are the minister of education for Alberta and, as one of your platforms for being promoted to the position, you have promised a complete overhaul of the way K-12 grades are taught and run. What changes do you make to the way education is done in Alberta?  -What are the goals that you want to achieve with these new changes?  -How might you put these plans into action?  -Who might be opposed to these changes? Why do you think they might be opposed? | A cure for cancer is found by a small, privately-funded research group in the United States. The research team has poured decades and millions of dollars into the project. The research team wants to sell the cure to the countries of the world in order to refund the money they lost in this endeavor and to reward them for the decades they put into the project. They refuse to release the cure to a country unless they are paid. The governments of both the United States and of other countries around the world however, are attempting to force them to reveal their research so that lives can be saved—especially in poor countries that cannot afford to buy the cure. Should the research team be forced to give the cure away?  -What might be the dangers if research teams and pharmaceutical companies are not able to make a profit off of the treatments they develop?  -How should patent laws work when it comes to pharmaceuticals? |
| People from a libertarian standpoint hold the concept of liberty (the freedom to do what one pleases as long as it does not infringe upon the rights of others) above all other rights. Because of this, libertarians tend to look negatively at taxes, because they believe that to take someone’s property is to take the time spent acquiring that property. To force someone to give their time, they argue, is slavery. What do you think of this argument?  -Medicine can be compared to libertarianism in that it holds autonomy (the right for a patient to choose his own path) over beneficence (doing good for a patient). Can you think of any examples in medicine of where this is the case?  -Can you think of any examples where this is not the case? | Recently, your best friend’s mother has died of cancer. You’ve noticed over the past few weeks that she has become increasingly withdrawn and doesn’t seem like her usual self. You have suggested that she see the school counselor on this issue, but she refuses. Yesterday she told you that she tried to take her own life by taking an overdose of Tylenol. It made her feel sick and caused her to pass out, but wasn’t able to kill her. She asks you not to tell anyone about this. What do you do?  -Do you have a responsibility to keep her confidences? What might happen to your friendship if you break them?  -If you could go back in time through this scenario, at what point after (or even before) her mother’s death would you recommend she seek help? At what point would you force her to seek help? |
| The supreme court recently made a decision as to whether or not genes could be patented. Proponents of the ban state that genes cannot be “created”, only “discovered” and therefore not owned by anyone (much like gravity, Antarctica or the moon). Furthermore, it is unethical to own a part of humans. Opponents of the ban state that the companies put effort into the projects and deserve compensation for their time and investments. They argue that without the possibility of genetics companies making a profit, they will not be motivated to continue existing. What do you think of this?  -Should it matter if the gene in question is already found in nature as opposed to created in the laboratory for a specific purpose?  -What other things should not be allowed to be patented? | A man and his 8-year old daughter come to the hospital for a minor procedure. When you meet the pair, you are surprised to discover that both of them are deaf. You are remarking to another physician about this coincidence when he suggests that the young girl may be a perfect candidate for a cochlear implant surgery that will restore her hearing. You tell this to the father, but he refuses. Because the surgery is only meant for young children, you cannot wait a few more years for the girl to become competent enough to consent for herself. What do you do?  -What might be a reason for the father’s refusal?  -How might being deaf affect the girl in the future? Is it simply an alternative lifestyle? |
| A 34-year old male patient of yours has recently been diagnosed with a dominant-autosomal genetic condition that shows up later in life. He is shocked and demands that you do not tell his family. The man’s sister, however, is also a patient of yours and, because the condition is dominant-autosomal, she has a 50% chance of having it too. Do you break confidentiality so that the sister can be tested?  -The sister has told you that she is trying to start a family. If she has the condition, she has a 50% chance of passing it on to her offspring. If she is told about the man’s condition, however, she can elect to undergo in vitro fertilization and select for eggs that do not carry a copy of the disease gene. Can you tell the sister under this scenario?  -Why might patients not want to tell their families about serious diseases? | You are shift supervisor at McDonalds fast food restaurant. The owner of the franchise has called you over. He is very upset as he has received 3 complaints in the last 30 minutes about the meat in the hamburgers being poorly cooked. There are two people (one male, one female both 15 years old) who have been cooking the meat for the past two hours. The female is the owner’s daughter. How would you handle the situation?  -How might you ensure the quality of future food?  -If the customers get sick from the undercooked meat, who should be held responsible? |
| Your older sister tells you that she values her career and is reluctant to take time away to have a baby. Her husband agrees with her. They have arranged to conceive an embryo through in vitro fertilization. A company in India will implant the embryo in a surrogate mother from a nearby village who will be paid $5,000. Two weeks after the baby is born, the company will deliver the baby to your sister and her husband. Your mother is opposed to this arrangement whereas your father supports her decision. Your sister asks for your support. How would you respond to your sister?  -What other alternatives to surrogacy might exist? Why do people choose surrogacy over these alternatives?  -What legal issues do you think are present in surrogacy? | Your friend is of Chinese descent and fluent in Mandarin. You both want to get into medicine. She registers for Mandarin 101, a course in Chinese language for beginners. The course coordinator asks that students who can already speak just a little bit of Mandarin should leave because this is a course for beginners. Your friend remains but makes a sufficient number of deliberate mistakes in the classroom discussions, in the required homework and in the examinations that she will not be detected and yet still receive an excellent grade. What would you do in this situation?  -What is wrong with your friend’s behavior? What professional qualities is she contradicting?  -If another friend of yours is very talented at math and enrolls in first-year statistics, is this any different? Why or why not? |
| The man who lives next door to you often rides his bicycle in the company of his two young children but without a helmet. In fact, on several occasions you have seen him riding with his helmet hanging by its straps from the handlebars. His young children sometimes wear a helmet, sometimes not. If the man fell off his bicycle and hurt his head in a way that would have been prevented if he had worn a helmet, would it be reasonable to ask him to contribute towards the treatment cost for his injury?  -Could this argument be extended to smokers—people who know that they are endangering their health, but do it anyway?  -Is it fair to have tax payers pay for the treatment of strangers? | You are spending your evening as a volunteer in the hospital. It is late and you see a number of staff duck into the supply closet with an empty bag and reappear in a few minutes with it appearing full. You have heard other staff members discussing that supplies are missing on a regular basis that can not be accounted for. After observing the actions of the other staff members, what do you do?  -What should be the consequences for the actions of these staff members?  -What policies might be made to prevent theft of medication and medical supplies? |
| You are a second year student shadowing a doctor in the O.R. Once the patient, an obese female has been given general anesthetic and the procedure is under way the doctors start to make comments about her weight and call her names that you find inappropriate but most of all unprofessional. Do you talk to the doctor about his comments or do you keep your comments to yourself? Why?  -What might be the harm if a patient were to hear these remarks?  -How might these doctors work on improving their professionalism? | You tell a mother her two year old child has leukemia, but she refuses chemo but insists upon seeing her family physician who is a naturopath. What do you tell her, how do you handle this so that you may continue to have some influence as regards the treatment of her child?  -Should child protective services be called?  -At what point does beneficence for the child outweigh the mothers right to autonomy?  -Should we automatically rule out naturopathy as useless? |
| Because of the desire to promote a healthy lifestyle, it has been suggested that medical schools preferentially admit students who commit to abstaining from smoking. Discuss the ethical issues surrounding this policy  -Is it appropriate for physicians to act as unhealthy role models to their patients? Are some “habits” easier for patients to discern than others?  -To what extent can authorities such as hospitals and medical schools control the personal behaviors of doctors and medical students?  - How would medical schools monitor a student’s smoking habit? | In certain parts of the world, people who are wealthy get taxed a higher percentage of their income than those who are poor. Proponents of this argue that richer people owe a higher debt to society because it was a reliance on others (ex. customers) that allowed them to make so much. In addition, they don’t “need” that much money, so it should be given to others who do need it. Opponents argue that the rich who have earned their money fairly (ex. through the free market) by performing transactions with willing customers in exchange for services and therefore do not “owe” anything to society. In addition, because they use the same services created by tax money, they should pay the same price. What do you think of these arguments, and do you think the rich should be taxed more?  -Would a flat-rate system (one where everyone pays the same dollar amount) be more fair than a percentage system (one where everyone pays a percentage of their earnings)? |
| Early access to AEDs (automatic external defibrillators) is an important step in performing CPR and has been shown to increase survival rates from ~2% to upwards of 50%. Unfortunately, due to the expensive nature and high maintenance required for AEDs, they are not commonly found in homes or buildings. In addition, poor bystander knowledge about AEDs and the widespread belief that only healthcare professionals can use AEDs decrease their use if one is available. What might be done to increase AED use in Canada?  -Fire extinguishers were once practically unheard of, but are now found in nearly every household. What aspects of this transition would you like to know more about, and how might you apply these aspects to increasing AED use?  -Would you install an AED in your house? What practicality issues might this pose? | What do you see  http://i2.cdn.turner.com/cnn/dam/assets/130522224216-03-522-oklahoma-tornado-horizontal-gallery.jpg  in this picture?  -If you could approach these two children, what would you say to them?  -How might people in a community support each other after the occurrence of a natural disaster? |
| What do you think  http://ak0.picdn.net/shutterstock/videos/1803008/preview/stock-footage-poverty-dump-special-machine-pressing-rubbish-and-homeless-people-looking-for-items-and-food.jpg  this picture this  picture shows? What  additional information  would you like to be  able to answer this? | This picture is taken  http://ak6.picdn.net/shutterstock/videos/1809005/preview/stock-footage-dirty-deprived-homeless-people-and-mountains-of-garbage-in-dump-fight-for-survival-environmental.jpg  from the same landfill.  Does this picture support  or contradict your theory  about the previous  picture?  -If you could talk to  these people, what would  you say?  -How does the addition  of relevant information  help change your view  of something? How might this apply to the area of medicine? |
| Recently, it has been debated whether hands-only CPR (where no rescue breaths are administered) should be performed instead of regular CPR. In order to study this, in a randomized trial, American paramedics in New York were divided into a hands-only CPR group, and a regular CPR group and were asked only to perform that type of CPR when responding to an emergency. The mortality rate of ~2000 patients (~1000 per group) was studied, and it was found that hands-only CPR was a slightly better option. Is there anything ethically wrong with this study?  -Many trials require that some people receive proper treatment, while others receive inadequate treatment (ie: a placebo) in order to gain knowledge. Is this acceptable?  -What would be the consequences if we did not allow studies such as these to occur?  -What policies should be put into place to decide whether a study where one group may not receive adequate treatment is ethical? | Mr. Wang, a 55 year-old patient, has had back problems for over 3 years. He states that ever since his back pains started, he has not been able to sit still for more than ten minutes. He has been on pain medications with minimal effect. His primary doctor, Dr. Ronaldson, believes that the only option left to entertain is back surgery. For various reasons, Mr. Wang is reluctant to undergo surgery, and instead asks the doctor to refer him to an acupuncturist. He tells Dr. Ronaldson that his insurance coverage requires a physician’s approval for “alternative” therapy. Additionally, he mentions that his wife has been successfully treated by an acupuncturist before. Should Dr. Ronaldson write the referral?  -What additional information would you like to know about acupuncture in order to make an informed decision?  -What dangers might lie in alternative therapy? Should all alternative therapy be labeled as useless? |
| Mrs. A is a patient in your clinic. In spite of going above and beyond to help her and accommodate to all her needs, she always complains when it comes time to paying her fees and often makes unreasonable excuses. One day you receive a release form from Mrs. A which states that she wants her medical records to be sent to another physician. Additionally, she states that she will try her best to pay what she owes your clinic by next year. Would you respect her wish and release her records to another physician?  -If you were the receiving physician, what difficulties might you encounter if the previous physician refused to release a patient’s records?  -What policies might you make in terms of fee payment? | A 98 year-old female patient comes to your family practice for a routine check-up. She sees healthy for her age, and in your opinion, does not require anything beyond a refill for her medication. To your surprise, she requests a referral to a cosmetic practice to have an expensive rhinoplasty (nose job) procedure. You inform her that this elective procedure would cost thousands of dollars, but she insists that you go ahead and book the appointment for her. Do you fulfill her request?  -Would your answer be any different if she stated she would have a difficult time paying for the procedure?  -Would your answer be any different if the patient was a 21-year old actress?  -What protocols might you implement to make sure patients are not discriminated against based on their age? |
| Mr. Johnson is 44 years old and works at a nuclear power plant. He lives at home with his two teenage daughters. One evening, Mr. Johnson is admitted to the hospital after falling down the stairs and fracturing his knee. Upon seeing the doctor, he refuses to sign the release form for the knee surgery. He says, “Just give me some painkillers, doc. I can’t afford to miss work for even one day”. Would you follow his request?  -Should you inform Mr. Johnson’s supervisor at work about his refusal for the surgery? Why or why not?  -What are some possible reasons for Mr. Johnson’s refusal?  -How do you ensure that Mr. Johnson has access to an appropriate support system once he is discharged? | You and another fellow medical student are shadowing a senior physician as part of a mandatory clinical rotation. During your second week, you notice that the physician often speaks Mandarin to his patients. Unable to understand mandarin, you become frustrated and discuss the matter with your fellow student. He replies, “I don’t really care. I just want to finish this rotation and get out of here.” What do you do?  -What system might be put in place to ensure that the volunteering senior physicians are appropriate choices to be supervisors for medical students?  -Is the behavior of the fellow medical student appropriate? |
| You are a third year medical student completing a rotation in a diabetes clinic. One evening, you find a friend request on Facebook. Upon reviewing it, you realize that it is from a patient around your age from the diabetes clinic. He is trying to connect with you so that he can ask you questions about applying to medical school. Do you accept him as a friend?  -How do you draw a line between your personal life and your work life?  -Is it possible to use social networking sites to engage in professional relationships with patients? | Fee splitting involves payment from one physician to another in exchange for referring a patient to them. What are the ethical implications of this?  -Should fee splitting be forbidden in medicine? |
| You are a newly recruited camp counselor in charge of designing fitness programs for autistic children. On your way to work one morning, you witness your supervisor holding hands with a female who definitely appears to be a minor. What actions would you take in such a sensitive situation?  -What policies might be put in place to ensure the safety of future campers?  -What additional information do you want to know?  -Who should be contacted? | You recently wrote a manuscript for publication, which you gave to your supervisor for review. After a month, he gives it back with a minor revision and the addition of his wife’s name to the author list. Knowing that your supervisor’s wife has had no involvement with the manuscript, what actions would you take?  -What professional qualities might your supervisor be lacking?  -What policies might be made so that the people who work on research projects are given due credit? |
| You are an intern working in a busy hospital. A 29-year old female patient, Natalie Iberian, is admitted to your unit after a car accident. One of the other interns points out to you that Natalie’s 2-year old son was killed in the accident. As you begin your daily rounds, Natalie directly asks about her son. Do you share the news with her?  -How might you break the news to Natalie? What support would you bring with you as you break the news?  -Is it ever acceptable for physicians to lie to their patients even if the topic is not medicine-related? | During an early morning lecture, one of your professors, who is well-liked by most students, publicly makes fun of one of your classmates who is taking a “power-nap” in class. Even though you are not close friends with the classmate, you have heard that he suffers from a sleeping disorder. What actions, if any, would you take in such a situation?  -Does the fact that the professor is well-liked have an influence on your decision?  -Is this student entitled to naps in class while other students are trying to learn? |
| Many developed countries, such as the US, Canada and the UK, have implemented a program termed “Travelling Nursing” to alleviate the nursing shortage in rural areas. Travelling Nursing enables nurses to travel to rural areas temporarily to work in various nursing positions. Discuss with the interviewer the advantages and the disadvantages of travel nursing in terms of healthcare quality and access.  -Why do you think there is a shortage of healthcare workers in rural areas?  -What might be done to increase the number of healthcare workers in rural areas? Who might be able to implement these ideas?  -Other than Travelling Nursing, what other solutions could be proposed to deal with the lack of nurses in rural areas? | You are just finishing your 17-hour shift and are about to leave home. You feel extremely tired. The co-worker who is taking over from you is late and you are being called to review a patient’s chart. You realize right away that the matter will take at least an hour to be resolved. What do you do?  -What do you say to your late co-worker when he arrives?  -What might be done to prevent healthcare workers from being late to work or alleviate the impact of late healthcare workers?  -What might you do to balance out your life between work, family, activities and other commitments when you are working long shifts? |
| In most clinical settings, LPNs (licensed practical nurses) often report to RNs (registered nurses). One day, you witness Natalie, an RN, speaking angrily to Robert, an LPN. Natalie is criticizing Robert about his nursing care and how he takes too long to complete routine tasks. If you are the supervisor of this ward, how would you resolve this conflict?  -What details would you want from both sides?  -What might be an appropriate way of assessing job performance on your ward? | You are a resident on the first day of the job. One of your best friends from medical school, who is also working on the same ward as you, appears to be sick. She tells you that she has had the flu for the past few days, but decided to come in today anyway because she doesn’t want to make a bad first impression on her supervisor. You notice that she is coughing quite a bit, and you worry that she might spread her sickness around. What do you do?  -What guidelines might be put in place to ensure that residents feel at ease with taking a sick day off without fear of repercussions?  -What might be done to ensure people do not take advantage of these guidelines? |
| You are a physician helping Mrs. Salderhoe, a 78-year old patient, diagnosed with AIDS and end stage liver cancer. She is in severe pain and requests that you leave her alone and “let her have a peaceful death”. You mentally take note of this, and begin to slowly remove treatment. Several days later, one of your colleagues informs you that everyone on the unit believes that you have ceased treatment because you are afraid of contracting HIV. How would you handle this situation?  -What might you have done differently?  -Should physicians be allowed to refuse to treat patients with infectious diseases?  -Do you think it’s necessary to discuss your reason for ceasing treatment with your colleagues? | You are a well-established cosmetic surgeon working in an underserved part of town. A long time patient of yours asks for advice about travelling to a third world country to save money on a costly cosmetic procedure. How would you discuss this issue with your patient?  -Would your response be any different if your patient was seeking a non-cosmetic procedure?  -What additional information would you like to know about the procedure in question and how it is performed in this other country? |
| A female patient comes to you complaining that one of your male colleagues touched her inappropriately during a clinical visit. She is asking you whether or not she should press charges. What would you do in this situation?  -Do you prefer to settle this case before a formal complaint is filed? Why?  -Is your primary obligation to this patient or to your colleague?  -How would your response change if the colleague in question was your supervisor? | You are a physiotherapist who has been out of school for many years. Due to personal circumstances, you move to a new city and look for a new job. The only available position is in a busy and well-established clinic situated several blocks away from your home. This clinic has goals set for each therapist to see at least 15 patients per day. In spite of feeling very nervous about your workload, you begin to feel more comfortable as you gain more experience in your new position. One day, you realize that you have made a mistake in managing a new patient. Upon assessing the situation, you feel certain that you will lose this much-needed job, which you financially rely on, if your supervisor discovers you mistake. What do you do?  -What might you do to improve your own skills to prevent incidents in the future?  -What might be the implications of the “15 patients per day” rule at the clinic? What might be proposed instead? |
| It’s 3:00 AM and you are coming back from a friend’s birthday party. In spite of the heavy snow fall, you decide to take the last bus home. You get on the bus using your student bus-pass and take a seat close to the driver. Three stops later, you spot a 12-year old girl waving at the bus. She appears extremely cold and tired. As she gets on the bus, she checks all of her pockets, but can’t find her bus-pass or money. She politely asks the driver to let her in without a pass, but the driver refuses and asks her to leave. Given that you have no money on you, what would you do?  -What would you do if you were the bus driver in the scenario, and you were aware that you were not allowed to accept passengers without payment?  -What would you do if the girl had gotten on with a bus pass that you knew did not belong to her? | You are volunteering at a local pharmacy when a 9-year old boy asks you where he can find some condoms. Would you tell him where they are?  -What are some of the factors that one should consider when selling condoms to a 9-year old?  -What do you think would happen if you don’t tell him where the condoms are? |
| You are volunteering in the medical unit at the local hospital. Your role as a volunteer is to talk to patients and keep them company during their stay. One evening, a fellow volunteer asks you to cover her shift. She tells you that she is cared and feels uncomfortable talking with Mr. Albert, a newly admitted HIV positive patient. He is out-of-province and has no one else to visit him. What actions would you take?  -Why might this volunteer be afraid of talking with Mr. Albert? | Mrs. Boel is a 36-year old psychiatrist who has been involved in a horrific motor vehicle accident and has been admitted to the emergency department as a result. In addition to severe blood loss, she has lost major facial tissue and has severely fractured both legs in multiple places. Upon assessment, it’s determined that both of her legs must be amputated. The patient can barely speak, but is able to communicate with the health care staff through nearly illegible writing. When asked to sign the consent forms for the amputation surgery, she writes what looks like “I wish not to be treated further”. Should treatment be terminated?  -How should doctors deal with ambiguity when treatment is involved?  -How might Mrs. Boel’s quality of life be diminished due to her accident? How might the healthcare team deal with these individual issues? |
| You are a cashier working in a newly established liquor store. One evening, while cleaning the shelves, a young lady asks you to help her carry four bottles of whiskey to her car. At the car, she requests that you put three of the bottles in the trunk, and one in the front passenger seat. As she removes her coat, you notice that she is pregnant. What would you do at this point?  -Should pregnant mothers be forced to seek treatment for habits that could affect the baby’s health?  -Do people have an obligation to take care of themselves before allowing themselves to become pregnant?  -What might liquor companies, liquor stores or healthcare workers do to spread awareness of the dangers of drinking while pregnant? | James is a second-year Canadian medical student completing an anatomy elective in Saudi Arabia. On the first day of the elective, he signs up to observe an autopsy. Not being able to speak Arabic, he asks his partner, Jamal, to translate for him. Once the procedure starts, Jamal makes several jokes about the cadaver that James finds disrespectful. What should James do?  -What professional qualities might Jamal be lacking? How might he work to improve these qualities?  - Why is it important to be respectful of those who have donated their body to science? |
| You are a first-year medical student in the anatomy lab. One of the rules that students must agree to before starting anatomy sessions is to not take any pictures or videos inside the lab. One day, you notice your best friend, Jennifer, has snuck a camera inside and is quietly taking pictures of another classmate, Thomas, and a cadaver. After the lab, you talk to Jennifer about the pictures, and she explains that Thomas’ grandmother wanted to hear more about his studies and that Thomas is making a scrapbook for her. What would you do in this situation?  -Why do you think pictures and videos are not allowed to be taken in anatomy labs?  -Why is it important to be respectful of those who have donated their body to science?  -What alternatives might be made to share Thomas’ experiences with his grandmother? | You are a first-year student in the anatomy lab. One of your friends, Lauren, has a severe phobia of dead bodies. She is scared to tell her instructors because she fears that it will affect her ability to pass the course. When you enter the anatomy lab, you notice that Lauren is very white and is clutching onto you very tightly. The instructor asks each student to put on a pair of gloves, and feel the organs in their respective cadaver. What would you do in this situation?  -What might be done to accommodate students who are not comfortable in anatomy lessons? |
| Your newly married best friend comes to your clinic complaining of male pattern baldness. Following some routine assessments, you prescribe him an oral medication which has been shown to be safe for men, but not for pregnant women. You explain that if his pregnant wife consumes or even comes in contact with the medication, their future child might have birth defects. He understands the warning, but requests that you do not discuss this visit with his wife. Several months later, his wife, who has recently undergone an elective abortion and is now experiencing chronic depression comes to your clinic and asks for help. What do you do?  -What additional information do you want to know about the wife’s abortion and depression?  -What might the doctor say to the wife to prevent her from coming in contact with the husband’s medication, while still maintaining the husband’s confidentiality? | You are a first year nursing student shadowing a staff nurse in a tertiary clinic. During your first day, you are asked to observe the nurse while she performs a routine venipuncture procedure on a 25-year old Chinese patient. While the patient is preparing the equipment, the patient loses consciousness and lays flat on the examining bed. The nurse tells you “Don’t worry. Everything’s fine” and performs the procedure on the unconscious patient. What would you do in this situation?  -What concerns do you have about the patient’s autonomy? |
| One evening you come home after an exhausting day at school. Upon entering your apartment, which you share with two roommates, you smell a strong cigarette odor. The next day, you ask one of your flat mates who has been smoking in the apartment. She replies, “All I know is it’s not me”. She tells you that, as an ex-smoker herself, she does not mind the smell. Not knowing your other roommate very well, how do you handle this situation?  -How might you increase communication with your roommates and set guidelines so that you can live peacefully together?  -If the roommate refuses to stop smoking in the apartment, what would you do? | You visit your GP for a routine examination. Before beginning the examination, he politely asks, “Would it be alright if some of our medical students observe today’s session?” You approve and he invites three students into the room. Halfway through the session, you notice that the doctor keeps asking the students if the “Video quality is clear”. Being curious, you ask what video he is referring to. The doctor responds that he is broadcasting this session live for the rest of the class. How would you handle such a situation?  -What might the doctor, witnessing medical students, broadcasted medical students and yourself have done differently?  -What is the best way of ensuring that patients give informed consent? |
| You are applying to medical school and ask your long-time graduate supervisor to write you a reference letter and mail it directly to the school. Several days later, you receive a letter in your mailbox and realize that he has sent you a copy of the reference letter by mistake. Shortly after, you receive a phone call from him directing you to discard the letter without reading it. Being curious, you open the letter and realize that your supervisor has written a very negative reference letter which includes false information about your time in his laboratory. What would you do?  -What should you have done differently?  -What might medical schools do to determine if information in reference letters are accurate? Are these steps reasonable? | Many would agree that a health care professional should be a model of health, but a significant percentage of healthcare professionals propagate the message that says, “Do as I say, not as I do”. In your opinion, should healthcare professionals be held to a higher standard of health than the rest of us?  -Would an obese physician be less effective in counseling a patient on a healthy diet than a non-obese physician?  -What guidelines might be put in place to ensure physicians are not employing a “double standard”? |
| Some medical schools implement a “Pass/Fail” system while other medicals schools give grades as percentages to their students. What might be the pros and cons of each system?  -Should all medical schools in Canada be required to follow the same teaching and grading method? What might be the benefits and drawbacks of this? | You are working as an emergency physician in the ER. One evening, a 14-year old girl is brought in after having been in a car accident with her boyfriend. The girl is unconscious, so you check through her purse in order to find some identification, as well as any organ donation cards, medic alert bracelets, Jehovah’s Witness cards, etc. While you are searching her purse, you come across a set of sexual paraphernalia including edible body lotion, a vibrator and several brightly colored condoms. Shortly after beginning treatment, the girl dies. You are told that her mother is coming to speak with you, as well as to pick up the girl’s body and her possessions. You know that it is illegal to take the possessions of others, but you consider throwing away the sexual paraphernalia to hide it from the mother. What do you do?  -Is it ever acceptable for a physician to impose his or her values onto a patient?  -If the girl had not passed away, but was instead in critical condition, would this change your response? |
| There has been debate on whether illegal immigrants to Canada should be allowed to receive transplants for scarce organs. One argument states that because Canadian citizens pay for Canada’s national healthcare, Canadians should have first priority over illegal immigrants who do not pay for healthcare. Others argue that citizenship should not enter into the decision, and everyone should be assessed for transplant candidacy based on universal standards (age, expected life expectancy without a transplant, lifestyle choices, etc.). What do you think should be done?  -What other “universal standards” do you think should apply when deciding who gets a transplant?  -If you believe Canadians should be given first priority for transplants, do you think this priority extends for other non-scarce treatments? | “Salary Caps”, laws which prevent professionals from earning any additional money past a certain dollar figure, have been suggested to be applied to medical specialists who earn very high incomes in the top 3% of Canadians. What might be the benefits and drawbacks of such a law?  -If salary caps are imposed and a specialist reaches his cap part-way through the year, should he be required to continue working for free? |
| There has been debate on whether reparations (financial compensation) to Native tribes should continue to be paid. Few deny the abuse that Native Americans suffered at the hands of early settlers and their descendants, but some people today believe that it is unfair to pay for their ancestors mistakes, and point out that reparations are being made to the descendants of those originally abused, and not to the abused themselves. What should be taken into consideration when deciding whether to continue reparations?  -How might Native tribes today be affected by abuse in the past despite not living through it themselves?  -Should reparations be given to other historically stigmatized groups such as Japanese-Canadians, who were imprisoned during WWII?  -Even today, many Native Americans live in poor living conditions and many suffer from severe medical problems such as substance abuse. Do you think reparations will be able to solve these issues? What else might be done? | There has been debate on gun laws in the United States and Canada. Some argue that tragedies such as school shootings and mass killings would be less likely if firearms were more difficult to get. Others argue that it is their constitutional right to bear firearms, and that if firearms were made illegal, the only people who would have them would be law enforcement officers and criminals. What should be taken into consideration when deciding whether to put government control on firearms?  -How might you explain the stance of someone who opposes gun control to someone who lost a loved one in a firearms-related accident? |
| It has been suggested that a special tax be applied to purchases that are associated with unhealthy habits such as cigarettes, alcohol and junk food. The theory behind this is that an additional tax will raise extra money for the government, and discourage Canadians from these habits. If you were on a committee tasked with approving or rejecting this law, what issues would you bring up and what side would you take?  -It has also been suggested that high sugar drinks should be removed from vending machines at schools. Is this any different from the proposed tax laws?  -Is it appropriate for the government to attempt to persuade its citizens to adopt certain behaviors or outcomes? For example, is it appropriate to grant tax cuts to married couples?  -Where do we draw the line between a government’s duty to protect its citizens and paternalism? | You are a medical student who is doing a rotation in the local emergency department. A young pregnant woman comes in one evening with several bruises on her chest, arms and abdomen and is concerned about the welfare of her unborn child. You ask her how she obtained her injuries, and she tells you that they are from falling down the stairs recently. As you examine the bruises, you notice that they are of different ages and therefore cannot possibly be from a single incident. You suspect that your patient is not telling you the entire story. What do you do?  -What might be the negative implications of being falsely accused of spousal abuse?  -Is it appropriate for a physician to force treatment for abuse on a patient? What if the patient is pregnant and the child is at risk as well? |
| The government has suggested the implementation of a tracking program that will track recently immigrated citizens (through emails sent, phone calls made, state crossing, credit card spending, etc.) in order to maintain public safety in the growing face of terrorism. The government does not plan to tell its citizens of this tracking program so that potential terrorists are not aware they are being tracked. As part of the ethics committee debating this subject, what topics do you think should be brought up?  -Should the government be allowed to sacrifice privacy to promote public safety?  -What do you think would happen if the government told its citizens about its plans? Would it be the ethical thing to do? | Imagine you are the principal of a large, respected school. There has been an allegation that a humiliating ﬁlm of a young disabled person has been circulating on the Internet. Two ﬁnal year students are up before you to explain their actions in the creation of the video. The video appears to show a young person with intellectual impairment being verbally abused by one of the students whilst a group of senior students look on laughing. What are the issues that you, as the principal, are likely to consider both before and at a disciplinary hearing?  -How would you go about establishing the facts of the case?  -What might be the impact of this case for the disabled young person?  -How would you react if the incident turned out to be a misunderstanding, such as if the senior students and the disabled young person had made a ﬁlm about discrimination against disabled people?  -How might you use this to raise awareness of discrimination? |
| It sounds really bad. You are on an airplane and after you have taken off for a 4-hour flight, a baby sitting right behind your seat starts to cry. As time goes on, even while you have earphones, the screams don’t stop. The parent accompanying the child keeps trying to quiet the baby down but to no avail. For every passing minute, the screams get louder and louder. You notice that the passenger beside you seems to be growing increasingly agitated. What do you do?  -What might airlines equip their planes with in order to accommodate young children better? | A lot of people you work with have noticed that many random things which they own are going missing. It appears that some personal items that are not extremely valuable have disappeared over the course of the last two months. Many of your co-workers are concerned. What suggestions would you bring to an upcoming meeting with your co-workers about finding a way to address this issue?  -Why might your co-workers be upset about non-valuables going missing?  -Who might you bring into this issue, and why? |
| You and your classmates are told to attend a very important meeting called by the dean of your faculty. Apparently it was recently discovered that a number of historic exhibit items from the laboratory have gone missing and remain unaccounted for. As a result, the dean decides that the laboratory will remain locked and off-limits indefinitely, and that everyone will be charged an additional $400 to cover replacement costs for the missing items. What do you do?  -What alternative suggestions do you make?  -A friend of yours is in debt due to tuition, and is not able to play the $400. What do you tell her? | You work as a retail clerk at a popular clothing store at the local mall. One day, you notice that one of your coworkers is watching pornography at the till’s computer during one of his breaks. When you confront him about it, he says that he will do whatever he wants on his breaks and that there’s no harm done. How do you respond?  -Do you tell any other coworkers or your boss about what you witnessed?  -Would it still be inappropriate if your co-worker used his smartphone to access these images instead of company property, and viewed them in the back room? |
| It’s about 40 °C outside, and you would like to turn your air conditioning on higher to make it more effective. Your roommates don’t agree. They are concerned with how much it costs to run the air conditioning at full blast, and since you are all on a limited budget, you all are not sure you can afford a super high utilities bill. What do you all do to compromise?  -How might you save money as a group towards your bills?  -How might you increase among your roommates? | Two of your closest friends, who have met each other, but are not friends themselves, are strongly considering running for an elected office within your university. Both of them are aware of you being the mutual friend, so they start talking to you about the other friend in disparaging ways to try to get your vote. What do you do?  -What rules should the university set up that will allow a fair run for election?  -You believe that one of your two friends will do better in office than the other. Is it more appropriate to vote for that friend, or not vote at all? What are the consequences of both choices?  -You decide to vote for the friend you believe will do better in office. How do you explain this to the friend you will not vote for? |
| As a sign of fraternity, you and some friends celebrate a major milestone by promising to each get a tattoo. Your significant other, however, is rather uncomfortable with the thought of you getting a tattoo. How would you talk with this person to get a better idea of what his/her concerns are?  -To what extent will you allow your significant other to have a say in your life choices? How might this affect your relationship with them?  -What might be the consequences of getting the tattoo and not getting the tattoo? | You are designing a website for a customer’s business. After you present your best proposal, when you give an estimate of the cost, the customer hedges. You have talked previously about the customer’s budget, and you did your best to work within his/her constraints. Now the customer wants a similar quality product for no more than one third of the cost. You may wind up being able to accommodate the change in price, but the product will be clearly inferior. You are slightly upset, because you have already started work on the original website, and you will have to start again from scratch. How do you work with this customer to find a solution?  -What policy might you make so that in the future, both you and the customer agree on the product and price before either party puts a lot of work in?  -Should you charge the customer for the work you put into the original product? Keep in mind that this is what the customer originally agreed to, but because it is unfinished, it will be useless to the customer. |
| You are a family physician in a private office. One day, one of your patients, Mrs. T, is late for her appointment. Because you have a busy schedule, you see the next patient on the list. This patient takes considerably longer than you expected—about half an hour. When you are finished with this patient, you are confronted by Mrs. T, who is upset that she had to wait 25 minutes after she arrived to be seen. She says that because of this, she is going to be late for a family dinner she had been planning. What do you say to her?  -How do you explain to patients why the patient before them took longer than you expected while maintaining confidentiality?  -Should patients be penalized for not showing up to appointments at all? Keep in mind that this appointment time could have been used to see another patient who needs to be seen. | You work as an employee at a restaurant. A few weeks ago, another employee at your restaurant left on bad terms. Employee possessions had gone missing every time this employee was working, and rumors spread that this employee was responsible for the theft. The employee later quit, and the thefts stopped. Today, you bump into this past employee at a competitor’s restaurant, and discover that she has recently been hired on here. You doubt that she told the competitor’s restaurant the true reason for her leaving. Do you tell her manager about your past experience with her?  -What are the potential consequences to this employee if you decide to tell her manager and if you decide not to tell?  -What are the potential consequences to the competitor’s restaurant if you decide to tell her manager and if you decide not to tell?  -What might you do to reduce theft in your workplace? |
| In one of your classes, you are assigned a project and randomly assigned teammates. One of your teammates is notorious as being a slacker and fails to hold her end of the bargain. It is also said that she never backs down on any argument that might get her out of doing a fair share of the team’s work. The last team she was on tells you that she was all too willing to criticize any suggestion made regarding the project, and they didn’t feel their final project was as good as it could be. What is your approach in dealing with this person?  -What might you suggest to the professor?  -What are the positives and the negatives of group work? Of individual work? | While you and your team are carefully tiling a wall, your supervisor does a spot-check and starts criticizing your work. Apparently, as you have been tiling, someone did not take great care measuring that the tiles were level and thus the detail of the tiles is not terribly even. Your supervisor handles this by criticizing each of you for gross incompetence and a lack of attention to detail in a very angry tone of voice. What do you do?  -What would be a more appropriate way for your supervisor to deliver criticism?  -What plan might you make with your team mates in the future to make sure you are all on the same page? |
| One of your friends calls you telling you that he is in the local jail. You arrive at the police station. Apparently your friend got caught up in a peaceful protest that did not remain so peaceful. While your friend says he was arrested for no reason, the police apparently have some evidence to the contrary. They say he was caught throwing tear gas canisters at a squad of police cars. To release your friend, you have to pay the bond of $5,000. What do you do?  -Does how much money you make and how good of friends you are influence your decision?  -If you do pay the bond to release your friend, what do you say to him on the car ride home?  -Do you believe that the payment of bonds is appropriate to excuse someone for certain crimes, or should all crimes carry a mandatory jail or community service sentence? | In June 2013, a flood hit Calgary, Alberta, destroying many properties and possessions. You are at a friend’s house when you hear that the flood is coming on the news, and are told that your friend’s house will be evacuated in two hours. What do you do?  -What will you keep in mind when deciding which of your friend’s possessions you will take with you as you evacuate?  -If you were told that your house is also due to be evacuated at the same time you are told that your friend’s house is being evacuated, what would you do?  -How might you support your friend during and after the flood? |
| As a volunteer in a hospital you come across a patient in one of the rooms who gets your attention. The patient is famished and says she needs something to eat. As a nice volunteer, you go ahead and give the patient an apple you happen to be carrying, and then go on your way. The next day when you are back on your volunteer shift, you overhear a very angry and disgruntled physician who is upset that somehow the patient you saw had eaten something before surgery in spite of the sign on the door indicating that the patient must not have anything for 24 hours. What do you do next?  -What policies might the hospital put into place to ensure this does not happen again? | With a major deadline coming up for a project at work, one of your best team members asks to speak with you in private. Apparently, something has happened with a family member, and your teammate asks for about two weeks of time off to take care of this situation. Your deadline is a week away, and your teammate is your best presenter when it comes to discussing your project to the clients. How would you handle this situation?  -Would your response be the same if your team member had planned this time off in advance?  -How would you feel if you were the team member that needed time off?  -What might you do to step up the presenting skills of yourself or another group member? |
| A classroom discussion focuses on corporeal punishment, specifically whether spanking should be allowed in schools. One of your close friends is adamant in her support for spanking, as she feels spanking as a child helped her get a better sense of right and wrong. Another friend in your class however is equally passionate against spanking, as he feels spanking becomes a justification for abuse. What do you say?  -What are some important things to keep in mind when mediating arguments? | A big-name guest is coming into town, and you were responsible for reserving a hotel room. Unfortunately you were really busy and forgot to book the room. Now all the rooms in the preferred hotel are booked, and your colleague who is chaperoning/hosting the guest is horribly embarrassed. In a more private moment, your colleague and your boss gang up on you and start yelling at you for your complete incompetence that negatively reflects on your organization. What do you say?  -What might you do differently next time?  -How might you make this up to them or otherwise improve the situation? |
| You are visiting your grandfather who has been suffering for a few years from Alzheimer’s Disease. More recently he has become more forgetful in failing to recognize you or remember your other family members. You decide to visit one day, but he doesn’t even acknowledge or recognize you. How would you talk to your grandparent?  -What difficulties do you think your other family members are going through with respect to your grandfather’s illness | Many employers and admissions committees may search Google for the online footprint of applicants they are considering to admit. Should an individual be denied admission solely on the basis of their online footprint if the information found in such a search is inconsistent with the application profile?  -What might be examples of online footprints (social media posts, videos, photos, etc.) that would cast doubt on an applicant’s professional attributes?  -If you were on an admissions committee, what negative online footprints would you have to find to reject an applicant?  -Is it acceptable for potential employers and admissions committees to search an applicant’s private life through the internet? Is material that is posted on the internet “private”? |
| While you are working for a restaurant as a server, you have been distracted by this one rowdy table full of people who are around your age, probably from your school. They are really obnoxious as they keep getting your attention to fill their waters, take a long time confirming their orders, and complain about the food… to the dismay of other customers you are also attending to. You bring their bill, and they disclose that they didn’t bring enough money to pay it off completely (or give you a gratuity). What do you do?  -Would it be acceptable to ban them from the restaurant in the future?  -How might the restaurant increase server morale after a tiresome dinner rush with unruly guests? | As an organizer for a guest speaker at your medical school, you organize the catering for your lunchtime presentation. You serve the food after the speaker’s lecture. During the reception, you notice some of your friends from a different program who clearly did not attend the presentation mingling with others and partaking of the food. This upsets a couple of the faculty members in attendance who ask you to call them out and kick them out. What do you do?  -What negative implications could this have on your friendship if you decide to kick your friends out?  -Could any compromises be reached? |
| You are on a long road trip with three friends in a medium-sized car. To save time, drivers are switched among you every 4 hours until you reach your destination. It is now midnight and you decide to play music during your shift (which begins at midnight) to keep you awake. However, as you are driving, one of your companions complains to you to turn off the music to make it easier for her to sleep. What do you do?  -What other plans might be arranged?  -What are your priorities in this situation?  -What might the difficulties be in pulling over for the night? Is this always a viable option? | You and a group of friends have been planning an extravagant holiday trip for your spring break, but you receive an invitation for a wedding of one of your closest and dearest family members that happens to be scheduled over the same time period and you had promised years before that you would attend. This wedding includes booking for a short cruise. You need to place a deposit on your spring break trip with your friends or the cruise. How would you decide?  -How do you break the news to the people whose event you choose not to attend?  -How might you be able to compromise in this situation?  -What are your priorities in this situation? |
| One day, your sister comes to you in an excited mood and raves over this new herbal pill that has been advertised to help enhance your memory. Your sister suggests you think about taking the remedy to help you as you are struggling with a difficult science class. What would you do?  -What additional information do you want to know about this remedy?  -Other drugs, such as Ritalin, have been shown to increase focus and are commonly used by university students to get an advantage. Is this fair?  -If the use of Ritalin is not fair, what might be some options to police the use of Ritalin to those who medically need it? Are these options viable?  -Is there any difference between using performance-enhancing drugs in sport vs. using performance-enhancing drugs in university/at work? | While you are studying in your apartment, you hear a couple shouting at each other in the next room over. The argument seems so heated that soon the sound of objects breaking against the wall, screaming, and crying is heard. What do you do next?  -How might your safety be endangered in this situation? Does this influence how you respond?  -What might be some negative outcomes if you choose to do nothing? |
| You have been working with a business partner for over five years. Recently you have realized that you would like the challenge of taking on more responsibility and starting your own business as you see that your business partner no longer satisfies your professional needs and passions. How would you approach this partner about splitting up?  -What would you say to your partner if he is strongly opposed to splitting up?  -What difficulties might you encounter on your own that you might not have with your partner? | While you were asleep, someone broke into your car. Missing from your car include your car stereo, your GPS machine, and your MP3 player (which you left behind in your car). Also missing was a bag containing prescription medicine which you had just gotten the night before and cannot be refilled for another month. What would you do in reporting the theft?  -What policies might pharmacies put in place to ensure that lost prescriptions due to theft or accident may be replaced, while ensuring that customers who want to take advantage of the pharmacy by acquiring extra medication with the intent to sell it or fuel a drug habit are not able to do so?  -What might you do in the future to prevent theft from your car? |
| You are pet-sitting a friend’s dog (large golden retriever) while she is away for a week. She does not leave a number that you can contact her at. Everything is going well until the second day you are caring for the dog when you realize the dog has made a huge mess in the entire apartment. The dog does not enthusiastically greet you this day. Instead the dog is in the corner and you also notice vomit in several rooms. What do you do?  -What would you do if you did not have the money for a vet bill?  -Image that you are given a contact number for your friend. What do you say to her? | You have had your beloved pet (cat or dog) for just about 15 years.  Your pet has been in declining health for the last 2 years due to an aggressive cancer and the costs to treat or manage your pet have been dramatically impacting your financial bottom-line. In meeting with your veterinarian, she tells you that your pet’s health — while not the greatest — has moderately responded to treatment, meaning that your pet has stabilized, but it may decline again within a year. How would you have a discussion with your veterinarian about your situation and your consideration of euthanizing your pet?  -What are your priorities in this situation?  -What additional information do you want from your vet? |
| You are in charge of a raffle in which the winner gets a $1,000.00 cash prize among other smaller prizes of $100 to ten others. Your assistant sends out an email and forgets to correct the consolation prize letter, so now you have 11 people thinking they won $1,000. You need to communicate the error to the ten winners, so what would you say and do?  -One of the consolation prize winners emails back very angrily after your response to him. He argues that he should be given $1,000 or he threatens to sue you. What do you do?  -How might you prevent mistakes like this in the future? | Your study group is pulling an all-night study session to prepare for a critical test in biochemistry. One of your study mates is struggling with keeping up and is getting very exhausted. A second study mate admits that he has been taking prescription-strength drugs to maintain focus and energy throughout the all-nighters and offers some to the sleepy colleague. What would you do next?  -Is it fair for your study mate to use drugs to achieve an advantage over other students?  -Is there any difference between the use of performance-enhancing drugs in sport vs. the use of performance-enhancing drugs in university/at work? |
| You are working in a clinical office for about a year as a secretary, and your supervisor (the doctor) has introduced you to pre-med student who will be volunteering in the office. After two weeks, the volunteer shows up to the office but he just watches you as you file and receive patient phone calls. He is more than enthusiastic about helping the supervising doctor whenever she is assisting a patient. The doctor asks for your opinion and comment in writing the volunteer’s “enthusiastic” letter of recommendation for medical school. Describe what you would say.  -How might you work with the pre-med student to become better in his volunteer position?  -How might you get feedback from the pre-med student and incorporate it into his duties? | A female health professional colleague of yours is concerned that her fiancé is growing more agitated about the requirement that she palpate male colleagues and patients. She says that her religion requires that she (as an unwed woman) not be allowed to touch other males unless they are family members or unless her fiancé allows her to. She asks that you talk to her fiancé about the situation. Discuss how you would approach this conversation.  -In what ways would you like to change healthcare so that it is more accommodating to healthcare providers and patients of different religions and backgrounds? |
| You are shopping  shoplifter  at the local  supermarket  when you see the  following scene:  What do you do?  -What other possibilities could this person be doing other than shoplifting? | You have just  http://static.guim.co.uk/sys-images/Guardian/Pix/cartoons/2012/4/4/1333554190640/Businessman-yelling-at-co-008.jpg  finished a meeting at  your new job. You  realize that you  forgot your bag in  the board room and  return to find the  following scene with  your boss and co-  worker. What do you  do?  -Would your response be any different if it was two of your fellow co-workers that you discover instead?  -What suggestions would you make to your boss about delivering effective criticism? |
| You are walking down the  https://encrypted-tbn1.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcRW7IaqzuMoTjR-PfedpF1U9pCw-j0_IvW8B5KCnzwyjRK0uRXk  sidewalk in your  neighborhood when you  come across the following  scene: what do you do?  -What if this was your car? | In 2007 the Journal of Dental Education surveyed over 1000 dental students and found that 74.7% admitted to some form of cheating during their undergraduate career. The university has asked you to be part of a student focus group to determine how to reduce the incidence of cheating. You are well aware of this behavior as you have observed the reusing of old assignments on many occasions.  -What suggestions would you make to help reduce the incidence of cheating and improve the academic integrity of students?  -Do you think that some forms of cheating are worse than others? Why or why not? |
| Your neighbor has a five year old child who has many decayed teeth. The mother asks you for advice because she knows you volunteer for a dental professional and her child is in pain. The mother needs a dentist who will accept monthly payment for treatment. You provide her with different options and coach her on how to seek dental care for a child. One week later you see the mother and ask if she was able to acquire care for the child. She says no. What do you do?  -Should dentists be allowed to deny a patient care due to an undesirable payment plan? What if the patient cannot pay at all?  -Should the government offer dental care to those who cannot afford it? What might be the implications of this? | A YouTube video of a group of junior high-school boys verbally abusing bus monitor Karen Klein went viral this July. The abuse included taunts, profanity, physical ridicule, and even threats to Karen’s person and home, ultimately resulting in her breaking down and crying. The video prompted an investigation on the part of school officials and local police. They were suspended from school and given 50 hours of community service. Klein stated that she would not press charges, partly because of the flood of criticism aimed at the boys. Do you believe the boys’ punishments were just, or what could have been done differently?  -Often times, action is only taken on an issue when the issue is brought to the attention of many people, such as when a video goes viral or a news story is broadcast. What do you think of this?  -What policies might the school put into place to reduce the incidence of bullying? |
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| During the Calgary Flood of 2013, despite the absence of a water boil advisory, many Calgarians flooded to convenience stores to purchase a supply of filtered water for home use. Many stores took advantage of this, marking up their water and ice prices as much as 300% in order to make a profit. Was this an acceptable thing to do?  Note: absence of water boil advisory means that there was no notification of change in drinking water quality  -What is the difference between this scenario and a scenario in which an electronics store raises the price of a new phone due to its high popularity?  -Does it matter that there was not a water boil advisory at the time?  -Do you think this practice should be illegal? What should the punishment be? | You are a genetic counselor. One of your clients, Linda, had a boy with a genetic defect that may have a high recurrence risk, meaning her subsequent pregnancies has a high chance of being affected by the same defect. You offered genetic testing of Linda, her husband, and their son to find out more about their disease, to which everyone agreed. The result showed that neither Linda nor her husband carry the mutation, while the boy inherited the mutation on a paternal chromosome that did not come from Linda's husband. In other words, the boy's biological father is someone else, who is unaware that he carries the mutation. You suspect that neither Linda nor her husband is aware of this non-paternity. How would you disclose the results of this genetic analysis to Linda and her family?  -What principles do you have to take into consideration in this case?  -What would you do if Linda requested you not tell the boy’s biological father? |
| The City of Calgary has taken great measures to increase accessibility to alternative forms of transportation (Additional C-Train lines, Bike Lanes, Calgary Transit Lanes, and road closures on specific holidays to make way for bikers and pedestrians). Discuss the impacts (both positive and negative) of these decisions.  -What factors should the City take into account when adding additional forms of public or environmentally friendly transportation?  -Is it unfair for citizens who do not use public transportation to have to pay for it through taxes? | Today, patients who are diagnosed with infectious diseases such as HIV are reported to the local public health agency. Patients are often upset at this and feel that their right to privacy is being taken away. What do you think of this policy?  -If one of your patients was diagnosed with HIV, how would you explain to her why her health status must be reported?  -Do you think this policy should be extended to reporting any other types of diseases? |
| The story of Canadian Olympian and Paralympian Brian McKeever has touched many during the 2010 Winter Games in Vancouver. He was the first ever to qualify for both the Olympic Games and Paralympic games, but at the last minute, the Olympic skiing couch decided that Brian has a smaller chance in winning than his teammates, so he did not get to race. If you were Brian's friend, what would you do when he found out he couldn't race in the Olympic Games? You knew that his Paralympic games would take place 2 weeks after the Olympics.  -Was the behavior of Brian’s coach acceptable?  -How would you feel if you were put in Brian’s shoes?  -Who do the heads of Olympic teams (eg. coaches, owners, etc.) have a responsibility to? | Statistics have shown that effects of advanced age such as changes in vision and response time may adversely affect elderly drivers' ability to drive safely. As a matter of fact, many doctors discuss the issue of stopping driving with their older patients as a precaution for the safety of theirs as well as the public's. Do you think older drivers should have to give up driving when they reach a certain age?  -Could this driving ban be reasonably extended to any other groups? What might be the problems associated with this?  -Is it ever acceptable to treat a population as if they were all the same?  -What issues might elderly people face if they are not allowed to continue driving? |
| You are a family physician. One of your patients, Mark, did not attend one of his classes and missed an important exam. He told you that his teacher would like a doctor's note explaining his absence from class; otherwise, he will receive zero, and all hell will break loose. He wants to you write a note for him, indicating that he was not feeling well enough to write the exam. Not able to find any physical symptoms, explain how you would deal with this.  -What additional information do you want to know about Mark or about what happened on the day of his exam? How might this influence your decision?  -Is it ever acceptable for a physician to lie about the health status of one of his or her patients? | You are a cardiologist at a local hospital, who just finished a shift and has a tight run to your daughter's high school graduation ceremony. As you headed off to the door, Jennifer, a patient who knew you well, saw you from the waiting room and grabbed your attention. "Doctor! I have a bad chest pain. Please stay for a bit. I'll feel much better if you were here."  -Who do you have a responsibility to? Which responsibility/responsibilities take precedence?  -What options do you have? What might be the implications of these options? |
| Chinese citizens are currently required to deposit a specific percentage of their income in a savings account for retirement. Proponents of such a requirement state that such a policy benefits those who would otherwise spend their money needlessly now, which would cause them financial difficulties in the future. The policy has allowed many Chinese citizens to afford an “on-time” retirement, rather than being forced to continue working into old age as a result of a lack of retirement savings. What is your opinion on such a policy?  -What do you think the reaction would be if a similar policy was implemented in Canada?  -What might the implications of such a policy in Canada be?  -When is it acceptable for a government to act in a paternalistic fashion? | The University of Calgary requires all of its students to pay for a public transit pass and a U of C gym membership when paying for tuition. Students are not given the ability to opt-out, and are required to pay for the pass and membership even if they do not intend to use these services. Do you think this policy should be maintained for this upcoming year?  -Should the university allow students who are physically unable to attend the gym to opt-out of the fee?  -What do you think the goals of this policy are? What other ways might these goals be achieved? |
| The University of Calgary adds an automatic 20$ donation fee to tuition payments for its students. The fee goes towards maintaining university programs and property. The university claims that this donation is “optional” and that students can opt-out of the fee by filling out a form and submitting it to Enrollment Services. What do you think of this policy?  -Does the donation amount play a role in your decision?  -What alternatives might be suggested to this policy? | Students often find it very difficult to register for high-demand university classes. As such, the University of Calgary has banned students from re-attempting high-demand courses for a period of 12 months after their initial attempt. In addition, when they are allowed to register a second time, they are given the lowest priority. What do you think of this policy?  -Are there any example cases that you can think of where this policy might not be fair?  -Do universities have a right to set guidelines as they see fit, or do they have an obligation to follow the consensus of tax-payers and students? |
| You are a high school  https://encrypted-tbn3.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcRoN-stf0CJFyyATQzEdAzERY56ElAtMD_9CzrzlEoQ7rN9yUyP  math teacher administering  a final exam. You look up  from your desk and see the  following image. What do  you do?  -Would you correct this matter immediately, or after the exam has ended? What are the benefits and drawbacks of both?  -Who else might you get involved?  -What policies might you put in place to reduce the incidence of cheating in your classroom or in the entire school? | You are on  http://www.ada.org/images/news/12115_cadavers.jpg  Facebook one  day, and you  notice the  following  picture on  your friend’s  profile. It is a  picture of the  anatomy lab at the medical school you both go to. You know that pictures are not allowed to be taken inside the lab. What do you do?  -Why do you think pictures are not allowed inside the lab?  -What do you think the consequences of a professor or a family member of one of the cadavers seeing this picture might be?  -What would be an appropriate repercussion for your friend? |
| You are an intern    working at the local  hospital. Recently, it  has been reported that  morphine has been  going missing from the  PCA machines (the  machines that administer  a constant dose of  medication ) of certain  patient rooms. One day, you see the following image of your colleague  withdrawing morphine from your patient’s PCA machine into an empty syringe. What do you do?  -Who do you have a responsibility to in this situation?  -What correction should be done to your colleague by the hospital administration? | You are walking down  http://static.guim.co.uk/sys-images/Guardian/Pix/pictures/2009/4/7/1239112699496/Protest--in-Chisinau-deno-001.jpg  the street to your job  downtown when you  see the following  image. What do you  think is happening?  -Would you get involved in this situation? What might you do?  -What if you were walking with a group of friends, and they wanted to do the opposite of what you suggested? |
| You are first year medical student shadowing a surgeon in the operating room. The surgeon is very good in taking you under his wing, and you are grateful for the time he is taking to teach you. Halfway through the surgery, the surgeon asks you to use his phone to take a picture of the anesthetized patient and his incision. He explains that his wife was curious about the type of surgery he is performing today and plans to show the picture to her. What do you say?  -What alternatives might you suggest?  -Does the fact that you like this surgeon and are grateful to him change your decision-making process? | Your friend has recently applied for a position as a salesperson at the local mall. She has never had a job before and is worried that she does not have enough experience to be hired. She confides in you that she misrepresented herself by adding a job that she never worked to her resume and asks you to pretend to be the old manager if her potential employer calls. What do you do?  -Would you consider this misrepresentation to be a “white lie”? Why or why not?  -Is it ever acceptable to tell a “white lie”? |
| In August 2013, the Quebec Government proposed a new law that would prevent employees from wearing any sort of religious garments or jewelry in public buildings. This would apply to any public organizations that receive government funding such as schools, hospitals, and community centres. The law was suggested in order to promote equality by having everyone dress the same, and to respect all religions by forcing the representatives of the government to have no identifiable religion. What do you think of this proposed law?  -What worries would you have if this law were to pass? If it were to be rejected?  -Would it be more acceptable if this law only applied to public officials such as elected leaders?  -What is the difference between equality and assimilation? | You are a family physician seeing a 7-year old boy, Christopher, and his mother. His mother tells you that he is being picked on at school because his ears stick out and that she would like a referral to a pediatric cosmetic surgeon. You talk to Christopher and he does seem upset about his ears. You agree to write the referral with the permission of the mother. A few weeks later, Christopher’s father calls you. He is angry that neither you nor his ex-wife consulted him in regards to the referral you made. He tells you to cancel the referral and that he does not give you permission to have the surgery performed on his son. How would you respond?  -Imagine that during your phone call with the father, he asks to have access to everything in Christopher’s file so he can see what his ex-wife has been saying in regards to the surgery. Would you allow this?  -What general guidelines should be followed when there is a disagreement between the parents of a child in regards to his/her treatment? |
| A waiter is serving a table at a family restaurant. The teenage boy at the table orders a glass of wine and the waiter serves it to him without asking for ID. The boy is unknowingly allergic to an ingredient in the wine and suffers from an anaphylactic shock. A week later, the family sues the waiter. As the judge listening in on this case, what is your decision-making process? | A couple in their late 30s decide that they do not want children at the moment, but may want to have some in the future. They have been told that fertility declines with age and are advised to undergo in-vitro fertilization and store the embryos until they are wanted. Years later, the couple divorces and the wife re-marries. She wants to use some of the frozen embryos that she previously set aside, but her ex-husband is still upset with her and doesn’t want to allow her. You are part of an ethics committee hearing this case. What do you decide? |
| Dr. Young is an experienced general surgeon working out of a Canadian hospital. Frequently, he encounters patients who complain of non-specific abdominal pain which has failed other courses of treatment. In these cases, Dr. Young will perform a surgery in which he makes a shallow incision in the patient’s abdomen and then immediately sews the incision up. The results of this mock-surgery are excellent with 80% of patients reporting a decrease in pain following the surgery and his mortality and morbidity rates are exceptionally low. Is what Dr. Young is doing ethical?  -Should Dr. Young be required to contact the past patients whose surgery successfully relieved the pain and tell them the truth about their operation?  -Is it paternalistic to use placebos? | Over the past few decades, scandals have emerged where it was found that funeral directors were selling the body parts of corpses to medical schools, transplant companies, and research industries. This was done without the knowledge or consent from the deceased’s family members. It is estimated that over $250, 000 dollars could be made from selling the individual parts of a body for transplant on the black market and that hundreds of thousands of transplant patients may unknowingly have illegal parts inside of them. What are the harms of this type of practice and what might be done to prevent this in the future?  -Considering the comparative scarcity of cadavers to the high demand of body parts, is it ever acceptable to harvest parts without consent if it will increase the quality of life for others without making a profit for the harvester? |
| In some countries, such as Spain, a process called “presumed consent” is being used to attempt to counteract the increasing number of people on organ donation lists. With this process, unless a person chooses to fill out a document to opt-out, his or her organs will be harvested after death. This is in contrast with the Canadian process, where a person must opt-in to consent to organ donation. Should Canada moved to the Presumed Consent model? Weigh the risks and benefits of doing so.  -Do you think the presumed consent system may have a negative impact on citizen’s autonomy and right to informed consent?  -What other options might you suggest to counteract the growing need for organs?  -A colleague of yours makes it a habit to ask patients who are imminently dying or their families for permission to collect the patient’s organs immediately after they die. What potential problems and benefits do you believe may result from this practice? | A recent B.C. Policy is requiring all health care workers to have the influenza vaccination or wear a mask at all times during patient encounters. Workers who do not comply with the policy risk being fired. Do you think that this is an appropriate policy? What alternatives might you suggest?  -Are the rights of the workers to make their own health care decisions being infringed upon? Is it acceptable to infringe upon their rights if it will provide safer care to patients?  -A nurse at your hospital claims that wearing a mask in patient settings is not always an option as it can upset some psychiatric patients. How would you respond to this claim? |
| There exist several HIV treatment centres in British Columbia where patients are permitted to “shoot up” with illegal drugs such as heroin on the property with the use of sterilized needles provided by the facility. These areas are supervised by registered nurses who watch for dangerous signs of overdose and are able to offer drug counseling should the patient want help with his or her addiction. Recently, the government has put in place several laws that make it difficult for these treatment centres to continue this practice legally. Do you think that these laws are a step in the right direction?  -Why do you think the government has proposed these laws?  -Do you think that physiologically dangerous drugs should be outlawed if it is shown that they only pose a danger to those taking them? Is it paternalistic of the government to prohibit someone’s actions “for their own good”? | Recently, Alberta has introduced programs designed to train more nurse practitioners (NPs) and physician’s assistants (Pas) and add them to the healthcare workforce. The role of a PA is to perform physical exams, take patient histories, make diagnoses, order and interpret lab tests and make treatment plans—all under the supervision of a physician. A nurse may become an NP with additional years of study and may work independently of a physician performing many of the same duties. In what ways do you foresee the addition of these healthcare workers improving the healthcare system, what possible shortcomings do you predict and how might we prevent them?  -What training do you think should be necessary for these positions?  -Do you think the government should focus on funding the training of more PAs and NPs rather than the training as many physicians? What might be the benefits and harms of such a strategy? |
| A single mother with three children is pregnant. She is 40 years old and knows that there is an increased risk of having a child with Downs Syndrome. She wants a genetic test to know whether the fetus she is carrying would have Downs. If it does, she would want to abort it, stating that she would not be able to care for it properly. Is her decision ethically justified? What would you do if you were her physician and she was discussing her plans with you?  -To what extent should parents be allowed to choose their children? Is reproductive autonomy—the right to reproduce as you see fit—an absolute right?  -Do you believe that the benefits of embryo screening outweigh the possible ethical and social dilemmas it causes? | A patient of yours has been in chronic pain and appears to be developing an addiction to pain killers. He asks you to give him more pain medication. You give him regular-strength Tylenol, knowing that the effect of the pill itself on his pain would be minimal, and tell him that it is a powerful new painkiller. He later reports to have a reduction in his pain. Were you justified in doing this?  -Would this act be classified as deception?  -Does deception have any place in medical practice? Are there any times when lying to a patient might be acceptable?  -What impacts on your reputation and the on reputation of the health care community might this act have if it is discovered? What difficulties might these reputational impacts bring in the future? |
| A spry but frail 94-year-old male patient, long widowed and living alone, has a history of heart disease. One day, he finds himself in the hospital due to heart failure. He tells his primary care nurse that he wishes to be released, stating that he wishes to die at home with dignity. His doctor feels that he cannot manage at home, and that he will end up back in the emergency room by next week, worse off than he is now. Although hardly happy, he is not depressed and understands the consequences of going home. He states that he is prepared to die as he has outlived all possibility of a happy life. Should the healthcare professionals assist him with his wish to die at home?  -What other alternatives might be explored with the patient?  -Many elderly, terminal patients are discriminated against when it comes to medical decision making with practitioners paying little attention to what they see as “hopeless cases”. How might one guard against personal biases such as this? | A 10-year old boy, accompanied by his father, visits a doctor for his annual checkup. The father leaves his son in the office while he parks his car. The physician notes that the boy is due for a tetanus booster shot. The boy refuses the immunization due to a phobia of needles. The doctor, thinking the father has left, asks the nurse to hold the patient while he gives the injection. The boy’s father is furious when he discovers what happened in his absence and threatens to make a complaint to the province’s regulatory college. What different actions should the physician have taken?  -Should there be a specific age where individuals are able to make their own healthcare decisions? If not, what should competency be assessed by?  -Is it ever acceptable for a physician to go against a seemingly irrational choice made by a patient? |
| You are the family doctor of a 45-year-old woman admitted to the hospital with syncope and possible seizures. This is her second such admission. During her first hospitalization three months ago, nothing abnormal was found. Informed of the admission, you come to visit her in the hospital. You are extremely worried: two days previously, the patient had confided in you that the real cause of her last admission was a beating that she suffered at the hands of her husband. He had never disclosed this to anyone, and asked you to keep it a secret. You are sure that this is the cause of her present admission as well. Upon reviewing her chard, you realize that this has not been considered by the attending physician. Should you reveal the patient’s secret to her admitting doctor?  -What effects might revealing the patients secret have on your doctor-patient relationship?  -Why might spousal abuse be underreported in healthcare settings? | You are looking after a 24-year-old man whom you have recently diagnosed with Wilson’s Disease—a serious genetic illness. You confirm your diagnosis and have him started on an effective treatment. The patient has two siblings who are also in your practice. You advise the patient to disclose his diagnosis to his siblings, recognizing that each of them have a ¼ chance of also having the disease. This, the patient refuses to do, saying he never got along with his siblings and that they could “rot in hell” as far as he is concerned. What would you do in this case?  -Does it matter if the siblings are in your practice or not?  -What other reasons might the patient have for not wanting to disclose his diagnosis to his siblings?  -Under what circumstances might it be acceptable to break a patient’s confidentiality? |
| A recent study shows that Canadians tend to think that a patient has a morally weaker claim to medical care when their illness is caused by personal conduct that is known to put their health at risk. For example, the Canadians surveyed were 10-17 times more likely to allocate a liver transplant to a patient with liver failure due to spontaneous liver cancer instead of a patient with liver failure due to heavy drinking. Do you think that this view should influence current health policies on the allocation of medical resources?  -Does it matter if the health resources in question are scarce or not? Is it acceptable to deny access to scarce resources but not non-scarce resources to patients who had a voluntary role in causing their illness?  -Should policies be modified to meet the views of a majority? When might this not be beneficial?  -What factors do you believe should be taken into account when deciding how to allocate scarce resources, such as liver transplants? | You are the provincial Minister of Health, and you have been asked to talk to an Albertan who is upset that for a fee of several hundred dollars, people in Alberta have the option of obtaining an "executive yearly physical", which differs from the standard yearly physicals in part because physicians order a variety of additional tests not covered by the public healthcare system. How would you address these concerns?  -Do you believe that patients should have the ability to access more or have faster access to medical care if they are able to pay for it out of pocket? What sort of inequalities might this create? Are these inequalities acceptable?  -What types of tests and treatments do you think should be covered by the public, and what should the patient have to pay for him or herself?  -Do you believe that healthcare is a right or simply a commodity? |
| Jerome is a wealthy father of four young children who works as a pediatrician at the local clinic. He falls seriously ill and is told that unless he receives a new kidney within the next few weeks, he will likely die. No one in his family is a match, and he is placed on the transplant list. Jerome’s wife, Marilyn, learns that there are other ways to get a matching kidney. She can offer a small amount of money to people in certain poor countries who are willing to take a test to see if they are a match for Jerome. Once Marilyn finds a match, she can pay that person to donate a kidney. A person can live normally with just one kidney. Jerome’s family can offer enough money to give a donor a comfortable life in his home country. The surgery to remove a healthy kidney for donation is painful and sometimes recovery is difficult. Should physicians allow this route to obtaining a kidney?  -Do you believe that the potential donor in this situation is vulnerable? Would he or she be taken advantage of? | Certain studies into drug manufacture require that half of the study population receive no treatment or a placebo, while the other half receives the proposed treatment. This is done in order to determine the effects of the drug.  You are a clinician-scientist performing a study that hopes to determine whether a novel drug may be used to treat Alzheimer’s. Is it ethical to deny half of the patients in your study the treatment that may help to cure their disease? |
| Chris is a medical student applying for an international research grant. He wants to study HIV. Chris’s advisor approves his proposal and put him in touch with his colleague Dr. K who runs a clinic in Vietnam. Dr. K tells Chris that patients in Vietnam have become wary of Westerners studying HIV on Vietnamese patients, and some have complained that only westerners benefit from the research. Dr. K suggests that Chris develop a project focused on heart disease, which is an increasing concern in the western community. Chris is reluctant to start over on his research proposal and feels that his HIV project is the more desirable for his own professional development. How should Chris approach this situation?  -How do Chris’ priorities differ from Dr. K’s? How important are they in comparison?  -How else could Chris’ advisor support him in his research? | Qing received an international research fellowship from her medical  school. The Liberian physician sponsoring her spent hours assisting with the paperwork for her visa, arranging accommodations for her, and hiring a car to pick Qing up from the airport. Qing faces a series of logistic problems in setting up the study, and it takes longer than anticipated to get her research underway. Qing’s sponsor spends one to two hours per day away from patient care helping her mitigate these difficulties, which disrupts the clinic and causes irritation among the clinic staff. At the end of her visit, Qing feels bad about her presence in Liberia. She mentions this to her friend back home, who replies that Qing has served as a “free consultant” since she was not paid and that this was more than enough. What do you think?  -What are reasonable expectations for both the student and preceptor to have while on an international professional trip?  -What responsibilities should Qing’s medical school have? |
| Amit, a fourth-year medical student, travels to Peru to work on a research project. He and his advisor hire several Peruvian research assistants from the community to perform interviews. After the project is underway, Amit realizes that the assistants often paraphrase the questions and sometimes gloss over the informed consent form. When Amit asks one of the research assistants about it, he shrugs and says, “I am sure they understand ok.” Amit is unsure what to say to his Peruvian supervisor or his advisor back in the United States. He decides not to say anything, because his Peruvian advisor is heavily burdened with clinical duties and his advisor from the United States is counting on this data for a publication. Was this the right thing to do?  -What responsibilities does Amit have while conducting research on foreign patients?  -What might have been done to prevent this outcome? | Andrew, a first year medical student, is doing a summer research project on tuberculosis infection among HIV positive. Dr. H, a local physician, accompanies him to his study site for one week to help set up the study. During the first week, the prisoners share their other health concerns with Dr. H who treats them with the prison’s limited medical supplies. After Dr. H. leaves, the prisoners expect that the research team will be able to continue treating their health problems, not only their TB. Andrew is faced with having to tell the prisoners that he is not properly trained to give medical care. Andrew is overwhelmed and frustrated that he cannot provide more help to the prisoners. What ethical dilemmas are present in this case?  -How do you think the research team is perceived by the prisoners?  -How might Andrew and Dr. H balance the healthcare needs of the patients with their research responsibilities? |
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