



REVIEW ARTICLE “MEDICAL ETHICS & ITS REFERENCES IN  
AYURVED LITERATURE”

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**ABSTRACT :**

Ethics means ‘moral philosophy or moral principles observed. Ethics in medical practice means the moral principles observed while doing medical practice. Ethics in medical research means the moral principles that we follow while undertaking medical research. Ethics is formal framework of the study. Thus Ethics is important in medical practice as well as Ethics in medical research.

Ethical practice while undertaking medical experiments or research has its origin during the period of the Second World War. After that on Ethics different act and guidelines got established. Helsinki declaration is one of the best guidelines on Ethics.

But unfortunately, at present also there are many unethical things in medical field still going on. Private hospitals, pharmaceuticals productions, present medical educational system and the medical practices are becoming commercial centre. Common man is trying to purchase the health. It lead to consumer protection law in medical field also.

There are many ancient literature related to Ethics in *Ayurvedicsamhitas.CharakSamhita* and *Astanga Hrudaya* having many references regarding ethics.

**Key words:** Medical Ethics, Ayurvedic literature

**INTRODUCTION:** Highly technology for the health &professionally managed hospitals and its allied branches has now served the patients limitlessly. C.T.Scan, ultraSonography,M.R.I.,&Angiography etc. Investigatory machines, cardio–neurosurgery, I.C.U., private hospitals, pharmaceuticals productions, present medical educational system and the medical practices are becoming commercial centre! The ethical medical practice reasonable charge and the responsive social approach will lead to healthy social system.

The western culture and medical system has made pseudo-understanding regarding the health that, ‘healthiness is the purchasable commodity’ hence the common man is trying to purchase the health from the commercialized medical

industries.If the reciprocal relationship and trust in between doctor and patients is finished then the social health will spoil. Hence to overcome this unhealthy social situation, the concept of family doctor is an ideal way for the social welfare of mankind.

**MEANING OF ETHICS:** Ethics means ‘Moral philosophy or moral principles observed. The term Ethics derived from the Ancient Greek word – ethikos, which is derived from the word ethos i.e. habit/custom.<sup>[1]</sup>

Ethics in medical practice means the moral principles observed while doing medical practice. Ethics in medical research means the moral principles that we follow while undertaking medical research. Ethics is formal framework of the study. Thus

Ethics is important in medical practice as well as Ethics in medical research.

**HISTORY OF ETHICS AND MEDICAL RESEARCH:** Prior to 1947, Ethical guidelines for Medical research were nearly nonexistent. However, profound evidence on ethical practice are found in Charak Samhita in the year 1600 BC. Hippocrates oath taken by doctors for good conduct in medical practice has its origin in the year 600 AD.

Ethical practice while undertaking Medical experiments or Research has its origin during the period of the Second World War. After the Second World War, the Medical profession and the whole world became aware of the shocking experiments that German doctors conducted on prisoners of the Second World War. These doctors conducted human experiments without their consent, subjected them to torture, grave risk of death or disability. From amongst these 23 doctors 16 were found guilty when given a trial in the court & 7 were sentenced to death.<sup>[2]</sup>

German doctors conducted cruel experiments on 2<sup>nd</sup> world war prisoners, tortured them and that was very unethical. In 1947 Nuremberg code established. After that Helsinki declaration is an important landmark and is the basis of good clinical practice guidelines. Main guidelines state, 'respect for person, beneficence and justice.'

#### **ETHICS IN AYURVEDIC LITERATURE:**

- The character of doctor must be ideal with his stable thoughts for ideal services for patients.<sup>[3]</sup>
- Doctor should treat the orphan and poor patients like own children.<sup>[4]</sup>
- Doctor who is educated but doesn't have experience gets confused by seeing

patients. Even such doctor dares to treat the patients then gentlemen will blame him and the king will sentence him to death.<sup>[5]</sup>

- The doctor will be a successful practitioner if he treats the patients efficiently and at appropriate time. In emergency, while treating serious patients, the negligence should not be done.<sup>[6]</sup>
- The patients who is egoistic, fearful, thankless, nervous, self-medicating and whose prognosis is poor, should be rejected by the doctor.
- The four major pillars of the treatments and management are mentioned in Ayurvedic literature. The learned doctor, the quality medicine, proper nurse, and obedient patient will give consolidated success to the scientific treatment.<sup>[7]</sup>
- The person should avoid the physical, vocal, mental types of 10 sins and the adverse ten types of mental and physical acts. The science-oriented deeds should be followed. Stealing, greed, and patients' exploitation are responsible for the crime and punishments.<sup>[8]</sup>
- The doctor should treat the patient considering the proper time, environmental condition and patient's physiological health. While treating the patient, the conscience of the doctor must be clear. Also with his goodness, Vaidya should keep his intelligence in equilibrium.<sup>[9]</sup>
- The ideal Vaidya can be defined as the one who acquired the scientific knowledge received by his teacher-ancestors, practical experiments, the alertness, the cleanness, pureness, of

thoughts and behaviours are predominating necessary qualities.<sup>[10]</sup>

- The weapons, the science and the water can be used by constructive and destructive purpose. Hence, for the treatment the conscience and intelligence should be clear, as the knowledge is universally beneficial to mankind.<sup>[11]</sup>
- The science is flame of light and the analytical mind is vision. If the treatment is given with this scientific joint concepts then if failure happen the discreet doesn't get recorded to doctor effort.<sup>[12]</sup>
- The affection and sympathy toward patients, the enthusiasm to treat the disease of better prognosis and to leave the bad prognosis disease are the expected quality of an ideal doctor.<sup>[13]</sup>
- The Vaidya who treats appropriately considering the fair assessment of the disease with poor and good prognosis.
- The Vaidya should not treat the grave serious disease of bad prognosis as it will spoil the money, knowledge, and the success as well as professional setback. Hence the doctor should not claim to treat successfully disease like cancer, AIDS etc. And should avoid the false bold statements.<sup>[14]</sup>
- The types of Vaidya include those who pretend themselves to be learned. Also qualified and quack, bogus, uneducated doctor were the challenging problem in ancient days as today is.<sup>[15]</sup>

#### REASON OF UNETHICAL THINGS IN MEDICAL FIELD:

- Private medical colleges having huge fees, donation & other capital investments. Which paid by each medical student which is not depend on financial background of family of

medical student. After graduation, there is a need to recover these investments and generate profit on them as soon as the student starts practice.

- Lack of teaching in medical college is one of the reasons of unethical practice. Students don't have knowledge then how he/she will treat to patient?
- Lack of ethicaleducation: no one medical college teach ethical practice to students. Student learns most of things in outside RMO-ship which is based on malpractices.
- There is competition in society to become rich. And there is saturation in medical field. So, some doctors choose unethical way to get success.

**CONCLUSION:** Indian doctors, schooled in Western science, are ignorant of the medical ethics of their own culture. They make a conscious effort to distance themselves from *Ayurvedic* medicine, in which the ethical codes are enshrined. Teachers and students forget that values have universal applicability, regardless of the mode of practice - Western or traditional - and that the patient remains the same regardless of the system.

Ayurvedic references of ethics are eternal, beneficial and applicable in today's 21st century life in struggle for existence also.

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