

# Ethical Considerations

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# Core Ethical Principles

Autonomy

Beneficence

Non-maleficence

Justice

# Autonomy

- ▶ An individual has the right to make informed decisions about their own care
  - ▶ Informed consent
  - ▶ Challenge may arise with children or those with cognitive impairments

# Beneficence & Non-maleficence

## Beneficence

- ▶ Performing actions that are for the benefit of another person
  - ▶ Procedures and treatments done with goal of benefitting the patient
  - ▶ Need to be continually reevaluated

## Non-maleficence

- ▶ “Do no harm” - avoid causing harm
  - ▶ Decisions on surgery risk, end of life care



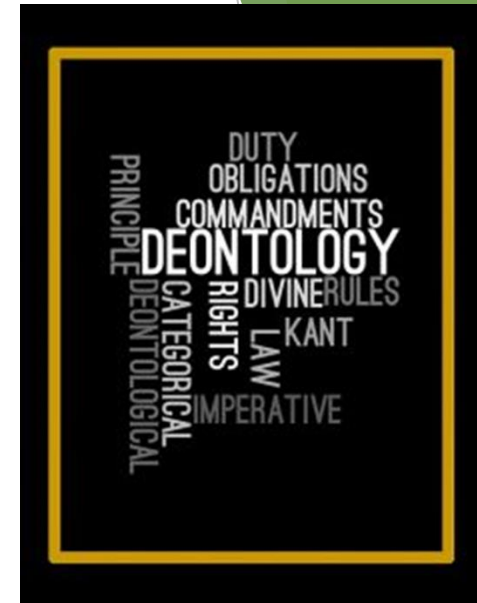
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# Justice

- ▶ Fair distribution of healthcare resources
  - ▶ Fair and equitable treatment of all patients
  - ▶ Challenges arise with scarcity of resources

# Ethical Theories

- ▶ Ethics of divine commands
  - ▶ Based on religious or moral beliefs of right and wrong
- ▶ Ethics of selfishness
  - ▶ What is right for an individual but does not infringe on the rights of others
- ▶ Ethics of duty and respect (deontology)
  - ▶ Focus is on what is defined as right and less on the consequences
- ▶ Ethics of Consequences (consequentialism)
  - ▶ Practical approach concentrating on outcome perceived to be good for the most people



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# Deontology

- ▶ A theory of ethics that judges actions based on whether they follow a set of rules, duty, focus, and intrinsic morality of actions rather than the consequences of those actions.
  - ▶ Duty and Obligation
  - ▶ Moral Rules
  - ▶ Respect for Persons



# Ombudsperson



Person that advocates for the rights of the patient and for adequate patient care, and assists in resolving conflicts



Investigate complaints and try to resolve the issue



# Ethics Committee

Work with patients, families and healthcare providers Assist with resolving ethical problems

Often provide education



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# What is the PRIMARY function of the hospital ethics committee?

- ▶ A. Provide structure and guidelines for potential problems
- ▶ B. Serve as an open forum for discussions
- ▶ C. Speak for patients to doctors about care issues
- ▶ D. Provide clinical case consultation