

PROFESSIONALISM IN CLINICAL PRACTICE

**Can Professionalism be
Taught?**

Model: A Curriculum in Clinical Ethics

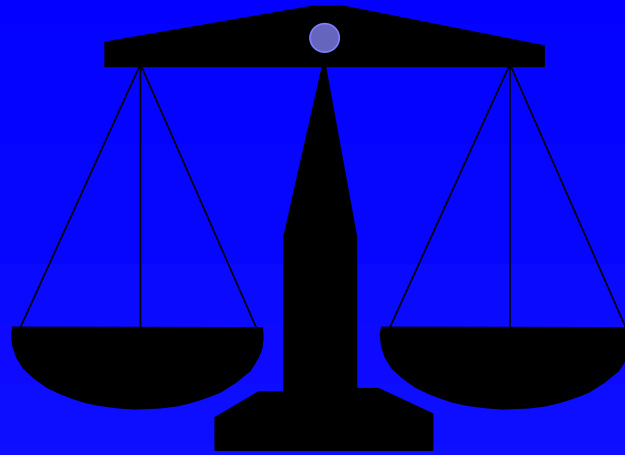
Clinical Ethics

- **What is it?**
- **Why teach it?**
- **An example of teachable ethical concepts**
- **The ACS ethics project**

Courses of Action:

- **Obligatory**
- **Permissible**
- **Wrong**

Beliefs and values conflict



**People of integrity and
goodwill disagree**

Clinical ethics

- **Provides guidelines**
- **Take a systematic approach**
- **Make thinking explicit**
- **Avoid overlooking factors**
- **Achieve consistent resolutions**

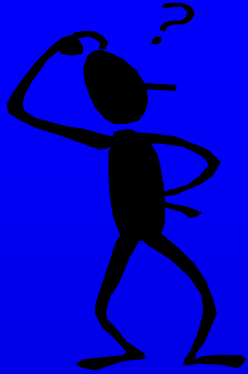
Steps to take:

- **Identify the ethical issue**
- **Gather information**
- **Review the principles**
- **Articulate the options**
- **Achieve resolution**

Ethics \neq Morality

Case Presentation

- 85 year old man
- cares for wife with Alzheimers
- 7.5 cm abdominal aortic aneurysm
- declined surgery 3 months ago but agreed to further discussion
- abdominal pain, BP=50, barely conscious
- no available relatives



**Should the surgeon proceed
with emergent surgery to repair
the aneurysm?**

YES

NO

Paternalism



Shared decision making

**Principles underlying
shared decision making:
(Informed consent)**

- **Autonomy**
- **Self-determination**

Key components of Informed Consent:

- 1) Disclosure**
- 2) Competency**
- 3) Comprehension**
- 4) Voluntariness**

Substitute decision makers

“Surrogates”

“Proxies”

Goal: Approximate the decisions the patient would make if the patient were still capable

Standards for substitute decision making

- **Explicit wishes**

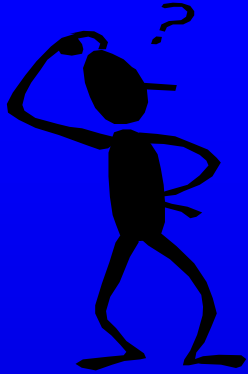
 - Advance directives**

 - **Proxy Directives (Durable power of attorney for health care)**

 - **Instruction Directives (Living will)**

- **Values and beliefs**

- **Best interests**



**Should the surgeon proceed
with emergent surgery to repair
the aneurysm?**

YES

NO

ACS Ethics Project: Goals

- To respond to societal and educational needs**
- To be congruent with ABMS initiative on competence**
- To meet Board requirement for continuing competence in professional behavior and ethics**
- To comply with ACGME and RRC requirements for training in ethics**

ACS: Ethics for the practicing clinical surgeon

- **Colloquium ACS Clinical Congress since 1995**
- **Webcast on ACS website in 2002**
- **Four clinical cases**
- **Challenges in our environment – scientific, moral, financial**
- **Debaters to polarize the issues**
- **Respected experts to adjudicate**

- **Research: Canadian experience, Internal medicine, existing university programs**
- **Successful elements: people, tools, evaluation**

Key points:

- **Applied, not formal, ethics**
- **Surgically relevant issues**
- **Focussed portable program**
- **Interactive teaching methods (e.g. skills component with trained patients)**
- **Well respected surgeons as teachers**
- **Tools and training for the teachers**

**Medical
indications**

**Patient
preferences**

External factors (e.g. costs)