

# Accountability, Altruism & Integrity

**SKLL-221**

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# Objectives

**Upon completion of this lecture, students should be able to:**

- Discuss the meaning and the key components of Accountability.
- Discuss the place of accountability in professionalism.
- Explain why Accountability is needed in the medical profession.
- Discuss the meaning and key components of Altruism and Integrity.
- Interpret some practical examples about Accountability, Altruism and Integrity.
- Apply knowledge learnt to case scenarios.

# Accountability...

“... Without doctors’ accountability medical services will never reach the standards we would like to see in our hospitals and health care systems”

- Samy Azer, 2008

# Definition of Accountability

“...Procedures and processes by which one party justifies and takes responsibility for its activities”

- It comprises responsibilities to patients.
- It comprises patient-physician relationship.
- It comprises responsibilities to colleagues.
- It comprises responsibilities to the profession.
- It comprises responsibilities to the society and public.

# Meanings of accountability

## 1.

**Responsibility**: that means to become responsible (accountable) to patients, their families, society, and community.

To become accountable for quality of care, resolving conflict, and upholding principles.

# Meanings of accountability

## 2.

### Self-regulation in activities:

This means that physicians' actions and behavior should reflect legal, good ethical conduct, and no financial conflict in their performance.

# Meanings of accountability

# 3.

**Standard setting for current and future members of the profession:** Accountability is about our willingness to maintain these professional standards in our day-to-day practices.

# Meanings of accountability

## 4.

### Ability to resolve conflict:

Conflict might be financial, pharmaceutical. There is a need to disclose any conflict that could damage doctor's accountability.



# Meanings of accountability

5.

Free acceptance of duty to serve public: A doctor is accountable for improving the standards of the health care of their community, their country and worldwide.

# Meanings of accountability

## 6.

Explain and give reasons for actions that could have caused harm to the patient, colleagues, and community: A doctor is accountable for actions that could cause harm.

# Why do we need accountability

- **Accountability is the key for providing optimal health care services.**
- **Accountability enables continuing improvements in the health care system at its different levels.**
- **Accountability helps in protecting the rights of patients.**
- **Accountability is essential in resolving conflicts.**
- **Accountability is essential for building trust, and ensuring that the workplace environment is safe and healthy.**
- **Accountability reflects behavior and attitude of responsible people.**

# Social accountability of medical students

- By enhancing the community health through education (e.g., prevention and early detection of diseases) and other community related health care services.
- By contributing to by research on community health problems and working with a research team conducting such studies.
- By committing your self to volunteer work that help in improving health care and awareness about diseases in the community.

**What does  
Altruism  
mean?**

# ALTRUISM

## What does Altruism mean?

To go beyond the call duty to help meeting the needs of others. In other words, to put the duty and patient care ahead of your own needs. The sense of “giving” of oneself in patient care.

The roots of the word “altruism” is from the Latin word alter, meaning “other”, meaning to look after others and help them.

# ALTRUISM

## What are the key elements in Altruism?

- Donate time to humanitarian causes such as Medicine Sans Frontiers (Doctors with no borders).
- Help or treat patients who are poor or cannot afford the costs of the service.
- Going beyond the call of duty to help patients.
- Show selfless behavior and the willingness to serve others, particularly those in need.
- Unselfish concern for the welfare of others.
- Subordinate your own interest to the interest of others.

What does  
Integrity mean?



# INTEGRITY

## **What does Integrity mean?**

Integrity evolved from the Latin adjective “integer” meaning the inner sense of “wholeness” as represented by a number of values such as honesty, trustworthy, fairness, and no favoritism.

# INTEGRITY

## Meaning of Integrity:

- Highest standards of behavior.
- Refusal to violate one's personal professional codes.
- Being fair, honest and truthful.
- Keeping one's word.
- Avoidance of relationships that allow personal gain to supersede the best interest of patients.
- Not working in the darkness or involved in any behavior that aims at harming others or taking their rights without their knowledge.

# INTEGRITY (Cont.)

## Take-home message:

Integrity is not just about a set of great values that you know or talk about.

Integrity is about demonstrating that the values you hold you are applying in your day-to-day practice.

# Practical Example 1

Dr . J.A. is a known urology surgeon working in one of the Ministry of Health hospitals. One of his patients has a chronic renal failure and is recommended for a kidney transplantation. Dr .J.A. agrees to conduct the operation. Over the next four weeks he works on preparing the patient for the operation. Two days before the operation, Dr .J.As' nurse rang the family and informed them that Dr .J.A. is travelling overseas and the operation will be postponed. They will be informed about the time of the operation when he is back in two month.

What do you think about Dr. J.A. attitude? Explain your views.  
What would you do differently if you were Dr. J.A.?

# Practical Example 2

Dr. AM is a junior academic staff at the college of dentistry and has been recently invited to join the assessment committee and share in writing examination questions.

Dr .AM has recently get engaged to Hind, an undergraduate student at the same college. Hind seems stressed about the coming examination. She asks her fiancé to help her in the examination and give her some idea and examples about what can be included in the examination. She does not know about Dr .AM's involvement in the exam committee and exam task groups.

What should Dr .AM do in such situation? Explain your views.

What would you do differently if you were in his place?

# Practical Example 3

Dr. HS has booked himself today for one hour only to see patients in the outpatient clinic before his travel to USA for a medical conference. Dr .HS is a very busy professor of medicine and has some responsibilities in the conference he is planning to attend.

Dr .HS is planning to see 3-4 patients only. A colleague whom Dr .HS knows well has two relatives who are not well and he asks Dr .HS to see them. Dr. HS saw the patients instead of the patients on the schedule.

What should Dr. HS do in such situation? Explain your views.

What would you do differently if you were in his place?

# Practical Example 4

Dr .FH is a known surgeon . One of his patients has undergone an abdominal operation. Although the operation was successful several complications occurred postoperatively. Dr. FH became unhappy with these outcomes. Instead of helping the patient to recover, he blamed his registrar and the nursing staff for the patient' s problems. He became unable to resolve the conflict with the patient. The patient' s family also was not happy with these outcomes.

What do you think about Dr. FH attitude?

What would you do if you were in Dr .FH situation? Explain why

# Practical example 5

Three residents working in a surgical ward were asked by the hospital administration to go to a rural area located about 300 km from where they live. They are asked to move because there are shortage in doctors in the region and they are needed to join the university health care services there. Two of the residents refused to go and requested an extra payment to join the team.

- What should the residents do in such situation? Explain your views.
- What would you do differently if you were in their place?



# Take Home Message

1



Accountability =  
Responsibility.

# Take Home Message

2



To be accountable you need to have self-regulation in your day-to-day actions.

# Take Home Message

3



Accountability requires that we maintain standard setting.

# Take Home Message

## 4



Accountability requires that we resolve conflicts (financial, ethical, moral, pharmaceutical etc).

# Take Home Message

## 5



Altruism means putting the patient's healthcare needs ahead of yours.

# Take Home Message

## 6



- . Integrity is not about talking or claiming great values that you know or have.
- . Integrity is about demonstrating that the values you hold you are applying in your day-to-day practice.
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