

## Assessment of Medical Ethics of Fourth-Year Medical Students

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From 2005 to 2008, the authors assessed the medical ethics of 779 medical students in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the Faculty of Medicine, Chulalongkorn University by using the Chula Method. This was conducted through a written examination asking the students to express their opinions about ethical issues. Their answers were rated as either Satisfactory (S) or Unsatisfactory (U). It was found that 750 students (96.3%) earned S while 29 students (3.7%) earned U. The results from this study can not be compared with the results from studies published in medical journals. Thus, knowledge about medical ethics is not complete even though it is intensively taught in medical schools and has been practiced for a long time. The authors would like to propose a new assessment of the medical ethics so that it can be systematically applied.

**Keywords:** Medical ethics, Assessment, Chula method

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Judging from the observed medical practices, there has been concern expressed that the present and future medical students will not be able to meet the standards of medical ethics expected by the public. It is commonly believed that every medical student is carefully selected with no bias or privilege and it is therefore expected that these medical students will be equipped with the medical ethics required of them<sup>(1-12)</sup>. However, despite the public perception, the reality of the situation has not actually been researched. The authors have consequently conducted a study to assess whether the medical ethics of medical students is appropriate and whether it has improved and been applied appropriately. The study focuses on the following areas:<sup>(2)</sup>

1. knowledge body – principles and theories
2. teaching methods, practices and examples
3. instruments and assessments

#### 4. results of the assessments

This study uses an assessment instrument, its application and its results. The instrument can be adapted to suit different purposes and the results can be used to predict the future.

#### Population, Methods and Results

From 2005 to 2008, there were 779 fourth-year medical students, 353 males and 426 females, who were studying in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the Faculty of Medicine, Chulalongkorn University. All of them have taken the practical course in medical ethics and have been assessed. The assessment instrument was a written examination. The students were asked to express their opinions about the following:

1. How can a medical student learn and practice medical ethics?
2. What are the differences between a person with highly-recognized ethical practice and a person with highly-recognized academic performance?
3. How can a medical student tell the patient or her relatives a truthful diagnosis?
4. Is it right or wrong to do the abortion?

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5. How can a medical student acquire knowledge, attitudes and practices which promote medical ethics?

6. When you see a patient who is involved in an unethical but legal issue, how would you deal with this matter?

7. When a woman and her baby die while she is in labor in the delivery room, how would you tell her husband and relatives?

8. What is your opinion about a pregnant woman who would like to give birth to her child at the time specified by a fortuneteller?

9. In terms of the medical ethics, what do you do to keep your patients' confidential issues, be fair, show respect and protect your patients' rights?

The above questions are included in the written examination which is the instrument to assess the medical ethics of the students in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the Faculty of Medicine, Chulalongkorn University. The authors would like to call this the Chula Method. The answers are rated either Satisfactory (S) or Unsatisfactory (U) and are calculated in percentage. It was found that 750 students earned an S grade (96.3%) while 29 students earned a U (3.7%).

### Comments

In fact, the medical ethics<sup>(1)</sup> had been long practiced until it was later developed as a subject that medical students worldwide have had to study and abide by in treating patients to ensure the best treatment. When a doctor strictly follows an ethical code, the public will not question his practice if one of his patients dies or does not get better.

What the authors introduced in this study is an instrument to assess the medical ethics of fourth-year medical students in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the Faculty of Medicine, Chulalongkorn University. Of these, 750 students (96.3%) earned an S grade while 29 students (3.7%) earned a U. This proves that the medical students at this university have the standardized medical ethics because out of 779 medical students, 750 students obtained an S while only 29 students obtained a U. The authors hope that the unsatisfactory (U) will reach zero percent in the future and are convinced that this aim can be materialized since the selection procedures at this university are very strict. The medical students at Chulalongkorn University will be efficiently trained in ethics.

It is a pity that the results gained by using this instrument cannot be compared with the results of similar studies in other medical schools because of the use of different instruments<sup>(6-9,13-30)</sup>. As a result, the academic assessment of the medical ethics cannot be complete in terms of systematic assessment and the adaptability to suit a culture, religious beliefs and the law. In addition, the assessment has to be open so that reexamination, revision and comparison can be made both at present and in the future. If this can be done, the medical ethics will receive wider recognition.

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#### การประเมินจริยธรรมในเวชปฏิบัติของนักเรียนแพทย์ปีที่ 4

สุขิต เม่าสวัสดิ์, สุรศักดิ์ ฐานิพานิชสกุล, ไพโรจน์ วิฑูรย์พานิช, เยื่อน ตันนิรันดร, กำธร พฤษานานนท์, บุญชัย เอื้อไพโรจน์กิจ, ตุลย์ สิทธิสมวงศ์, วรพงศ์ ภู่งศ์, ธาธิณี แมนชนะ, สมชัย นิรุติศาสน์

ระหว่างปี พ.ศ. 2548 ถึงปี พ.ศ. 2551 คณะผู้นิพนธ์ได้ทำการประเมินจริยธรรมในเวชปฏิบัติของนักเรียนแพทย์จำนวน 779 คน ที่ภาควิชาสูติศาสตร์-นรีเวชวิทยา คณะแพทยศาสตร์ จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย โดยใช้เครื่องมือที่เรียกว่า CHULA METHOD เป็นข้อสอบให้ตอบแบบเรียงความ และนำคำตอบไปประเมินผล โดยให้คะแนนเป็น Satisfactory (S) และ Unsatisfactory (U) พบว่านักเรียนแพทย์จำนวน 750 คน ได้คะแนน S และมีจำนวน 29 คน ได้คะแนน U หรือคิดเป็นร้อยละ 96.3 และ ร้อยละ 3.7 ตามลำดับ การประเมินผลจริยธรรมในเวชปฏิบัติเช่นนี้ไม่สามารถนำไปเปรียบเทียบกับโรงเรียนแพทย์อื่น ๆ ที่เคยมีบันทึกไว้ในวารสารการแพทย์ องค์ความรู้เกี่ยวกับการประเมินผลจริยธรรมในเวชปฏิบัติยังเป็นส่วนที่ขาดหายไป ทั้งที่จริยธรรมในเวชปฏิบัติมีการเรียนการสอนอย่างเข้มงวด มีการฝึกปฏิบัติและมีตัวอย่างให้ดูและเลียนแบบตลอดเวลา คณะผู้นิพนธ์จึงขอเสนอวิธีการประเมินผลจริยธรรมในเวชปฏิบัติ และผลการประเมินไว้เป็นหลักฐานเพื่อเสริมองค์ความรู้ในส่วนที่ขาดหายไป โปรดพิจารณาและพัฒนาให้สามารถนำมาใช้ฝึกปฏิบัติอย่างเป็นระบบสืบต่อไป

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