

Pharmaceutical Law and Ethics

What is Ethics

- With every profession are associated certain sets of moral principles may it be health related profession or engineering. Ethics merely mean science of moral duties towards society.

Difference Between Law and Ethics

Law	Ethics
Rules of human conduct binding all persons in a state or nation.	Rules by which a profession regulates actions and sets standards for all its members.
Law may prevent one from harming others, but it can't force someone to help the needy	Helping the needy is a value attributed by ethics.
If law is broken the violator is subjected to legal prosecution which may include fine or imprisonment or both depending on the severity of crime committed	If ethics are breached the violator is subjected to loss of professional privilege e.g. his license may be suspended, he may not be able to enjoy the honor of him being a professional.
A law is something that you must obey	Ethics expects a sensible and responsible behavior towards society.
Law prevents pharmacist from selling substandard drugs, but cannot prevent him from selling drugs at a lesser price than his fellow pharmacist	Selling drugs at reasonable rate and not getting into cut throat competition by selling drugs at cheaper rates is a part of ethics.
Law deals with actions that are punishable	Ethics deals with right or wrong.

Pharmacist in relation to his job

- **Pharmaceutical services:-** A pharmacist being a responsible individual of healthcare system it's his moral duty to provide efficient pharmaceutical service through medical store or pharmacy, which may include supplying medicines without delay and having ready stock of emergency supplies at all times.
- **Pharmacy/ Drug store:-**
 1. It is very important that a pharmacist is in-charge of the pharmacy/ drug store. Unqualified person as the in charge of store may pose a threat to public thus degrading the status of pharmacy.
 2. It is expected that a pharmacy is well furnished and planned in a manner that it avoids any possible contamination during preparation, dispensing and supply of drugs or formulations.
 3. A neat and clean pharmacy with a competent staff always reflects professional character, which also assures public of good quality services.

- **Prescription:-**

1. Handling of prescription is one of the major aspects that a pharmacist has to deal with. Whenever a prescription is presented to him its very important that he does not discuss the prescription with the patient.
2. He must not show any expressions on face which might cause patient to lose faith in the physician.
3. Physician having the right to diagnose and prescribe, any addition, omission, substitution of ingredients must not be carried out without consent of physician except in emergency cases.
4. If an error is observed in prescription, it should be referred back to the physician for correction or approval of change suggested.
5. If change in prescription is necessary it must be consulted with physician and then only done. Utmost care must be taken not to demean the reputation of the physician.
6. It's unethical to recommend any physician to a patient, unless specially asked to do so.

- **Practical training:** - it is mandatory that every student who has completed his diploma in pharmacy undergoes practical training at a drug store/ pharmacy. It's the moral duty of pharmacist to impart practical training to the students in drug store of which he is in-charge. It must be observed that no certificate is granted to any of the trainee without him completing the said time of practical training.
- **Drug/ ingredients:-**
 - Ingredients and drugs must be weighed accurately.
 - It is necessary to use drugs of standard quality.
 - Habit forming drugs must not be dispensed without a valid prescription form the physician/ prescriber.



Pharmacist in relation to his trade

- **Hawking of drugs:-**

1. Door to door promotion of drugs and collecting orders of drugs must not be practiced by any means.
2. The concept used in malls 'self- service' must not be encouraged in pharmacy/ drug store as it may result in encouraging self-medication by the patients.

- **Advertisement's and display:-**

1. Advertisements regarding the special services and abilities of pharmacy must not be circulated by any communication media as like newspaper, pamphlets etc.
2. Advertisements that may be misleading or guaranteeing therapeutic efficiency for a particular disease which may not be cured by medicines must be prohibited.
3. An appeal to fear must be avoided under any circumstances.

- **Price structure:-** pharmacist must not unduly tax a person for a particular medicine.



- **Fair trade practice:-**

1. Being into business it is natural tendency of humans to expect that more purchasers must be attracted towards his firm. It by no means certifies anyone to go for unhealthy competition by reducing prices, offering gifts, add on coupons prizes etc just for the sake of attracting customers.
2. Copying or imitating trade-marks, logo, symbols of fellow competitors to manipulate their sale must not be done.
3. Drugs to be stored for the purpose of dispensing must be purchased from reputed sources only.



Pharmacist in relation to medical profession

- A physician has a right to diagnose a disease and prescribe medicines accordingly. Pharmacist must be well aware of this fact and must not try to diagnose a patient and prescribe drugs. He has the power to render first aid in emergency cases.
- A pharmacist should not have a clandestine or underhand agreement with any physician.
- Pharmacist must refrain himself from entering into secret agreement with the physician, dentist veterinarian etc, by offering him gifts or commission for the sake of recommending his drug store.
- Pharmacist should at no cost agree to recommend a particular physician or vice-a-versa.
- It is said that pharmacist is a liaison between medical profession and public. It is his responsibility to keep himself updated with newer trends in the profession. He must advice physicians on current trends in pharmaceutical field. At the same time he can educate public on how an individual can maintain a healthy lifestyle.
- Discussing physician's prescription with patients is against the ethics of pharmacy.

Pharmacist in relation to his profession

- A pharmacist must take every possible care to maintain and enhance the status of pharmacy profession.
- It is ethical custom to give a helping hand to his fellow pharmacist in emergency and legitimate needs.
- In order to maintain status of pharmacy profession it is necessary to weed out dishonest and corrupt members from the profession.
- Pharmacist must keep himself updated with newer trends in pharmacy profession which will help him expand his horizon and also benefit the public.
- Finally a pharmacist should not perform any act that might bring discredit to his profession or himself.



Thank you!

