Medical ethics in Ancient Indian system of medicine

Dr Ranjana Pandey1,[[1]](#footnote-1) Dr Bal Govind Tiwari2

1Ayush Department, All India Institute of Medical Science, Saket Nagar, Bhopal, 462020 Madhya Pradesh

2Department of Agad Tantra Evm Vyavhar Ayurveda, Bundalkhand Government Ayurvedic College,

Gwalior Road, Jhansi, 284003, Utter Pradesh, India

E-mail:dranjanapandey@gmail.com

Ethics have an important position in every professional sector. Without ethics, it is not possible for any profession to be successful and useful to society. That is why while making the rules of any profession to run smoothly; ethical rules are added equally. The Indian Medical Council Act 1956 empowers Medical Council of India to make regulation for the professional conduct of doctors.

Ayurveda is one of the oldest systems of medicine in the world. Ayurveda not only describes the idea of ​​the rules of healthy living, but also describes many diseases and their treatments. All these information are spoken with great importance in everyplace but very little dialogue about moral principles related to medical education described by Ayurveda. Ayurveda not only describes the qualities and principles of the physician but also describes the qualities and principles related to patients, attendants and drugs.

Acharya Charak in his treatise has described the virtues of the physician and the ethics related to him so prominently that the description becomes available after every few chapters. It is enough to show the fact that medicine cannot be without ethics and both are complementary of each other. Medical work without ethics is a business and it is harmful for society. In this research paper an attempt has been made to review the rules and ethics related to ancient medical world and its uses in present time.

**Kay words**: Medical ethic, Ayurveda, MCI

**Introduction**

Social rules, ethical rules and practical rules are required for any country, society, institution or family to run smoothly. Every person should follow these rules, if he tries to change it, then the society and the family will also have a lot of interference. Similarly, to make any professional community works efficiently, some rules are framed in which the professional community can function smoothly. The importance of these rules increase deeply in a holy profession like medicine. Medical work cannot be done purely with business mind, so involving in medical work without morality is like a crime. Medical Council of India (MCI) gives a clear ethical guideline for medical professionals. MCI described about the duties and responsibilities of doctor a physician said uphold the dignity and honour of his professor. A physician should be an upright man, instructed in the art of healing. He shall keep himself pure in character and be diligent in caring for the sick; he should be modest, sober, patient, prompt in discharging his duties without anxiety; conducting himself with propriety in his profession and in all the action of his life.

Acharyas have the knowledge of the fact that without ethics, the practice of medicine can be harmful to society. With this reason Acharays effectively describe the importance of medical ethics with diseases and their treatments. These ethical rules are uniformly relevant today. It is futile to imagine medical science without these properties.

The duties and responsibilities of the doctor can be categorised-

1. Responsibilities and duties related to himself
2. Responsibilities and duties related to patient
3. Responsibilities and duties related to Country Law
4. Responsibilities and duties related to paramedical staff and colleague

**1. Responsibilities and duties related to himself:**

* 1. ***Maintain good medical practice***

It is mandatory for any doctor to have good medical practice along with sound knowledge as well as physical efficiency, mental efficiency and many other social expressions. The physician is the most important factor1 during any medical procedure because only a physician can manage all the factors in a right direction. A physician should have four type attitude2Friendship and kindness towards patients, love towards curable patients and apathy towards incurable patients. The doctor should be clever, acumen and get pure knowledge from the teacher, who knows the medical literature3.

A doctor with all the qualities, who is able to save the life of a patient, is addressed in many names like life saving physician and physician with qualities. A good life saving physician encompass knowledge with direct vision of the performance, skill in behaviour, skill in medical deeds, well established unit with all the equipments, knowledge of diseases, patients and medicine, good senses capable of doing things4,5,6,7.

Learning, specific knowledge (proper knowledge of medical science), memory (recalling power), rationality (to make perfect diagnosis), alacrity (to manage emergency cases) and action (to give accurate treatment) - one who possesses all these six qualities nothing remain unachievable for him8.Acharya while describing the two main qualities of a physician said that a doctor who knows diseases and the proper use of medicines would be successful9. The proper knowledge of medicine is one of the best properties of a physician1. Drugs are used according to the state and duration of each disease and only the doctor who knows it succeeds10 because with proper use, a poison also becomes a good medicine and due to improper use, the drug becomes harmful like poison11. It is most important for a physician to know the proper dose of a medicine according to the stage of disease. Practical knowledge is the best way to remove any doubt1. All the qualities and means related to medicine depend on the doctor so it is duty of the doctor to enhance his qualities time by time12.

***1.2Updates his professional knowledge***

Every day new research is being done in medical science, new tools, diseases and medicines etc. are coming, a physician should have knowledge of all these. The Acharyas discussed three methods for the growth of knowledge13. 1. Study 2.Teaching 3. Seminar

Along with their studies doctors should participate in the seminar to renew their knowledge. Acharyas have said that to join a seminar is the excellent way for a practitioner to increase the sense of intelligence1.While declaring the specialty of seminar, the Acharyas say that seminar increases the knowledge, gives enjoyable surroundings, eliminates many doubts, read some topics without a doubt, some facts of unknown topics comes to light14. This form of seminar is also seen in modern times.

* 1. ***No other than doctor practice***

In a country with a large population like India, where the basic facilities of medicine do not reach the general public, it becomes easy for a wrong person to practice but such medical practice has not been legal since ancient times in India. The person who does not hold above qualities of a doctor and practices illegally are called Rogabhisar (who increases the illness), fake physician.

Those who have not studied the scriptures have not done medical works and do not know how to use medicine properly should be discarded15. Apart from this, a person who has stayed with a doctor for a few days and a person has done medical work but has not studied scripture, all such fake doctors are polymorphic; they should also be renounced by the society16.

* 1. ***Render to serve humanity***

Acharyas describe medical work as the best charity because life is the best charity that a doctor does by keeping compassion17.With compassion the physician who performs treatment without intent of money rises himself above the materialistic world18. Kindness and compassion are essential quality of a physician2.

**2. Responsibilities and duties related to patient**

*2****.1 Doctor and patient relation***

The Acharyas said that a patient is just like a son. Acharyas instruct to treat the patient with kindness, kindness by showing a father-son relationship2, 8.The same way that a father gives the highest priority to the protection of his son and always maintains the proper nutrition of his son throughout his life, in the same way, a doctor protects any patient19, 20.

***2.2 Payments for professional service***

In Ayurveda, the acquisition of wealth has not been said in priority in medical practice because the doctor's work is mainly for the protection and treatment of humanity, and the preaching of Ayurveda medicine is charitable by the maharishis and not for the achievement of money and desire21. The doctor renounces the golden amount and collects the amount of dust that uses medical knowledge for his appetency22.

**3. Responsibilities and duties related to Country Law**

***3.1 violation and penalty***

It is due to the imperfection of the king that the fake doctor visits the country23, 24, that means, if the right rules are followed by the king then a quack will not be born. A person who knows the scriptures but is not proficient in direct work and who can do medical work but has no classical knowledge, both of them are entitled to get punished by the king25. All those physicians who have completed professional sessions but did not do internship and those who learned medical practice but did not go through professional session, they both are not eligible for medical practice. A person can do medical work only after studying the scriptures and practical practice; otherwise such a person should be punished like a thief26.

***3.2 Misconduct and adultery***

Acharyas say that a physician should not sit down with women alone and should not take any things provided by them27.

**4. Duties and responsibilities related to their colleagues**

***4.1 Relationships with colleague and society***

The Acharyas mention that every person should stay away from the practitioners who condemn the other28. The doctor is an ideal person for the society; therefore the doctor should not condemn his colleague as well as others. The patient should not go to the doctor who castigates other.

***4.2 Relationships between medical educationalist and his disciples***

The Acharyas also want to emphasize the ideal relationship between the medical educationalist and his disciples. Who does not give appropriate medical knowledge to his disciples is a partaker of sin29. Similarly the student should earn knowledge by respecting his teacher and keep himself away from fear, anger, greed, jealousy, ego and laziness30.

**Discussion**

In Ayurvedic medical science, a detailed description of the ways of preserving healthy state, causes of diseases, proper use of medicines is establish in a comprehensive manner. With all these, various ethical issues ​​have been described in detail. The principles of moral values ​​were also a part of the syllabus of Ayurveda, which was necessary for all students to learn and follow. There is always a possibility of a person to move down from ideal state. Achyras make the morel education as a compulsory part of medical education. The doctor is always an ideal person for the society so he should maintain the dignity of himself.

**Conclusion**

Different diseases were also originated along with the origin of mankind. Human being always felt the need of a high-quality physician for the elimination of diseases. A good medical practitioner cannot be born without morality. Ayurveda the oldest treatise of medical science described each of the medical issues with full concentration and medical ethics is one of them. All these qualities are uniformly relevant in our day also.

**References**

* 1. Sharma P V, Charak Samhita, of Acharya Agnivesh with English translation, (chaukhambhaorientalia), Varanasi, 1981, part-1, Sutra Sthan, 25rd chapter, 40thsloka, P.169.
  2. Sharma P V, Charak Samhita, of Acharya Agnivesh with English translation, (chaukhambhaorientalia), Varanasi, 1981, part-1, Sutra Sthan, 9rd chapter26thsloka, P.64.
  3. Sharma P V, Charak Samhita, of Acharya Agnivesh with English translation, (chaukhambhaorientalia), Varanasi, 1981, part-1, Sutra Sthan, 9rd chapter, 6thsloka, P.62.
  4. Sharma P V, Charak Samhita, of Acharya Agnivesh with English translation, (chaukhambhaorientalia), Varanasi, 1981, part-1,Sutra Sthan29rd chapter, 7thsloka, P.233
  5. Sharma P V, Charak Samhita, of Acharya Agnivesh with English translation, (chaukhambhaorientalia), Varanasi, 1981, part-1, Sutra Sthan11rd chapter, 53thsloka, P.78
  6. Sharma P V, Charak Samhita, of Acharya Agnivesh with English translation, (chaukhambhaorientalia), Varanasi, 1981, part-1, Sutra Sthan30rd chapter, 83thsloka, P.247
  7. Sharma P V, Charak Samhita, of Acharya Agnivesh with English translation, (chaukhambhaorientalia), Varanasi, 1981, part-1, Sutra Sthan9rd chapter, 22thsloka,P.64
  8. Sharma P V, Charak Samhita, of Acharya Agnivesh with English translation, (chaukhambhaorientalia), Varanasi, 1981, part-1, Sutra Sthan9rd chapter, 21thsloka,p. 64
  9. Sharma P V, Charak Samhita, of Acharya Agnivesh with English translation, (chaukhambhaorientalia), Varanasi, 1981, part-1, Sutra Sthan8rd chapter, 15thsloka, P.55
  10. Sharma P V, Charak Samhita, of Acharya Agnivesh with English translation, (chaukhambha orientalia), Varanasi, 1981, part-1, Sutra Sthan1rd chapter, 123thsloka, P.13
  11. Sharma P V, Charak Samhita, of Acharya Agnivesh with English translation, (chaukhambhaorientalia), Varanasi, part-1, Sutra Sthan1rd chapter, 126thsloka, 1981. P13
  12. Sharma P V, Charak Samhita, of Acharya Agnivesh with English translation, (chaukhambhaorientalia), Varanasi, 1981, part-1, Sutra Sthan9rd chapter, 25thsloka, P.64
  13. Sharma P V, Charak Samhita, of Acharya Agnivesh with English translation, (chaukhambhaorientalia), 1981,Varanasi, part-1, VimanSthan8rd chapter, 6thsloka, P.351
  14. Sharma P V, Charak Samhita, of Acharya Agnivesh with English translation, (chaukhambhaorientalia), Varanasi, 1981, part-1, VimanSthan8rd chapter, 15thsloka, P.356
  15. Sharma P V, Charak Samhita, of Acharya Agnivesh with English translation, (chaukhambhaorientalia), Varanasi, 1981, part-1, Sutra Sthan29rd chapter, 11thsloka, P. 236
  16. Sharma P V, Charak Samhita, of Acharya Agnivesh with English translation, (chaukhambhaorientalia), Varanasi, 1981, part-1, Sutra Sthan11rd chapter, 52thsloka, P.78
  17. Sharma P V, Charak Samhita, of Acharya Agnivesh with English translation, (chaukhambhaorientalia), Varanasi, 1983, part-2, ChikitsaSthan, 1rd chapter 4th part, 61thsloka, P.34
  18. Sharma P V, Charak Samhita, of Acharya Agnivesh with English translation, (chaukhambhaorientalia), Varanasi, 1983, part-2, ChikitsaSthan, 1rd chapter 4th part, 62thsloka, P.34
  19. Shastri A D, Sushruta Samhita of MaharshiSushruta with Ayurvedatatwasandipikahindi commentary (chaukhambha Sanskrit sansthan), Varanasi, 2001, part-1, Sutra Sthan, 25rd chapter, 44th sloka,P.107
  20. Sharma P V, Charak Samhita, of Acharya Agnivesh with English translation, (chaukhambhaorientalia), Varanasi, 1983, part-2, ChikitsaSthan, 1rd chapter 4th part, 56thsloka, P.33
  21. Sharma P V, Charak Samhita, of Acharya Agnivesh with English translation, (chaukhambhaorientalia), Varanasi,1983, part-2, ChikitsaSthan, 1rd chapter 4th part, 57thsloka, P.34
  22. Sharma P V, Charak Samhita, of Acharya Agnivesh with English translation, (chaukhambhaorientalia), Varanasi,1983, part-2, ChikitsaSthan, 1rd chapter 4th part, 59thsloka, P.34
  23. Shastri A D, Sushruta Samhita of MaharshiSushruta with Ayurvedatatwasandipikahindi commentary (chaukhambha Sanskrit sansthan), Varanasi, part-1, Sutra Sthan, 3rd chapter, 52th sloka,2001. P.13
  24. Sharma P V, Charak Samhita, of Acharya Agnivesh with English translation, (chaukhambhaorientalia),1981, Varanasi, part-1, Sutra Sthan29rd chapter, 9thsloka, P.235
  25. Shastri A D, Sushruta Samhita of MaharshiSushruta with Ayurvedatatwasandipikahindi commentary (chaukhambha Sanskrit sansthan), Varanasi,2001, part-1, Sutra Sthan, 3rd chapter, 48-49th sloka, P.13
  26. Shastri A D, Sushruta Samhita of MaharshiSushruta with Ayurvedatatwasandipikahindi commentary (chaukhambha Sanskrit sansthan), Varanasi, 2001, part-1, Sutra Sthan, 4rd chapter, 8th sloka, P.15
  27. Shastri A D, Sushruta Samhita of MaharshiSushruta with Ayurvedatatwasandipikahindi commentary (chaukhambha Sanskrit sansthan), Varanasi,2001, part-1, Sutra Sthan, 10rd chapter, 10th sloka,P.34
  28. Sharma P V, Charak Samhita, of Acharya Agnivesh with English translation, (chaukhambhaorientalia), Varanasi,1981, Sutra Sthan30rd chapter, 82thsloka, P.247
  29. Shastri A D, Sushruta Samhita of MaharshiSushruta with Ayurvedatatwasandipikahindi commentary (chaukhambha Sanskrit sansthan), Varanasi, 2001,Sutra Sthan, 2rd chapter, 7th sloka,P.9
  30. Shastri A D, Sushruta Samhita of MaharshiSushruta with Ayurvedatatwasandipikahindi commentary (chaukhambha Sanskrit sansthan), Varanasi, 2001,Sutra Sthan, 2rd chapter, 6th sloka,P.6

**­**

1. Corresponding author [↑](#footnote-ref-1)