Table 1: Examples of intent-action alignment drawing parallels between the Mahabharata and the surgical world.

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| **Aligned virtues (good intent – good action)** | **Misplaced virtues (good intent – bad action)** | **Veiled vices (bad intent – bad action)** |
| Respect for teachers – Ekalavya, Arjuna, Karna on Drona | Excessive devotion to mentor leading to asymmetric favors such as gift authorship or ghost authorship in research work – Ekalavya’s self-mutilation | Progress at the expense of another colleague’s opportunity or reputation – Arjuna’s utility of Drona in disabling Ekalavya |
| Noble purpose of healing patients – Ekalavya’s intent of learning archery | Relinquishing leadership opportunity (surgical or academic) to appease request from an esteemed colleague – Karna’s excessive altruism towards Indra and Kunti | Utilizing network or personal connections to gain advantage in surgical leadership, as a proxy for experiential wisdom – Arjuna’s reliance on Krishna’s wisdom in all matters before and during the war (q.v. Karna’s self-reliance) |
| Desire to excel in surgical craft – Ekalavya, Karna and Arjuna on their dedication | Excessive loyalty to a colleague even when their clinical/ academic/ administrative decision is unacceptable – Karna’s loyalty towards Duryodhana |  |
| Generosity to colleagues– Karna’s altruistic nature | Attaining prestigious scholarships/ fellowships by falsifying resume – Karna’s lie to Parashurama about his origins |  |
| Integrity in profession – Karna’s steadfast ability to abide by his decision |  |  |