

Title: Reflective learning of ethics using case studies

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Context and learning: The “ethics and professionalism” component in our medical curriculum was not structured and it was delivered in the form of lectures during the pre clinical phase while the teaching of ethics during the clinical phase was largely opportunistic. We decided to formalize the teaching of ethics and professionalism in our curriculum by re-structuring it, emphasizing the use of case studies and introducing a formative assessment.

Why the idea was necessary: Studies have shown that teaching of medical ethics can increase students’ moral reasoning skills. Moreover exposure to small group case study discussions increases their relevance in the clinical context and reasoning skills compared to that learnt from didactic lectures only. Students are able to retain these skills for a longer period with case based small group learning.

What was done: Opportunity for learning medical ethics will be provided throughout their five years of the medical curriculum. In the first year there will be a few large group sessions focusing on learning the principles of medical ethics. The students will be given a briefing on reflection and reflective practice and the level of reflections. A core group of faculty was trained to facilitate the small group reflective learning sessions. In the later years all the sessions will be case study based small group sessions. In the clinical years most of the case studies will be prepared by the students from their clinical encounters in the hospital setting. This would familiarize them to use of ethical principles in the real setting. Later they will be given a case study involving the ethical issues and they will be asked to write a reflective report on that case.

All students are required to keep a record of their learning in a portfolio which will be assessed both by formative and summative methods. One of the main components of the portfolio will be their ability to write reflectively based on their case studies.

Evaluation of results and impact: The reflective report will be assessed using a six level rubric. The students will be given a feedback on their reflective ability. Their ability to write reflectively will be monitored over the years of medical education to determine if there is an improvement in their level of reflection.