

# Importance of Bioethics in Medical Activity

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## ABSTRACT

The bioethics, or ethics applied to life, is mentioned as science of survival, which stood out in recent years, building a bridge between medicine, philosophy, and ethics. We aim to present a synthesis of the importance of bioethics for doctors in their professional practice. This knowledge must be complete, not limited to a general reflection about principles. The doctors, on top of the science and technology knowledge, will greatly improve with the ethical and moral precepts applied to the profession.

**Keywords:** Bioethics; Principles; Beneficence; Autonomy; Justice.

## RESUMO

### Importância da Bioética na Atividade Médica

A bioética, ou ética aplicada à vida, é mencionada como ciência da sobrevivência, que muito se destacou nos últimos anos, constituindo uma ponte entre medicina, filosofia e ética. Objetiva-se apresentar uma síntese da importância da bioética para os médicos no exercício profissional. Este conhecimento precisa ser pleno, não se limitando à reflexão geral dos princípios. Os médicos, além dos conhecimentos de ciência e tecnologia, apresentarão grande evolução com os preceitos éticos e morais aplicados a profissão.

**Palavras-chave:** Bioética; Princípios; Beneficência; Autonomia; Justiça.

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## Introduction

Bioethics, or ethics applied to life, emerged in the United States, initially being used by Van Rensselaer Potter, in 1971, as a science of survival, one that combines science and ethics, playing the role of bridge between these areas, medicine and philosophy<sup>1</sup>. Physicians must present, in their professional practice, scientific, technological and ethical knowledge<sup>2,3</sup>. Bioethics consists of a systematic study of human conduct, in the areas of life and health sciences, and is evaluated according to its values and moral principles<sup>4</sup>. Its knowledge by physicians must have a precise character, not being limited to the general reflection of the principles<sup>5,6,7</sup>. In 1978, the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects from Biomedical and Behavioral Research published the Belmont Report, which established three fundamental principles of bioethics: beneficence, autonomy and justice<sup>8</sup>.

## Method

The study consists of a text that was elaborated from the analysis of the literature, which made it possible to subsidize the conception of information regarding the important aspects of bioethics in the life of physicians in professional practice. A careful evaluation of the literature was carried out, including scientific articles in Pubmed database, Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO) and Latin American and Caribbean Health Sciences Literature (LILACS), as well as chapters of books consecrated in the literature, related to the central theme of the study. Keywords that were used: Bioethics, Principles, Beneficence, Autonomy, Justice.

## Results

The principle of beneficence aims at the well-being of the sick, having its roots in the oldest tradition of Western medicine, in which the doctor must aim, above all, for the good of the patient. The exercise of autonomy is characterized by knowledge and information; in following this principle, the doctor must respect the wishes of the patient or his legal representative, and must have all relevant data at his disposal to enable him to make a decision. The principle of justice demands equity in the sharing of goods and benefits regarding the practice of medicine or the health area, forcing the guarantee of fair, equitable and universal distribution of the benefits of health services.

## Discussion

Beneficence is a universally accepted principle, practiced in all cultures. The good, according to sociobiology, as well as the different philosophical schools and religions, is an innate character in the human species<sup>8,9</sup>. The changes brought about by the new democratic times made the patient conquer the right to decide about himself, including in matters related to his health status.

The principle of autonomy is one in which the doctor must respect the will of the patient or his legal representative<sup>8,10</sup>. The manifestation of the essence of this principle is informed consent, an act of voluntary decision, performed by a capable person, who has adequately understood the information revealed, accepting or refusing proposals for action that affect him.

The principle of justice aims at the re-establishment of the social order in accordance with the law, supposedly capable of determining the right place for acts and things in the world, born of the correlation between individual freedom and social equality. Impartiality and equity are the main theories of justice in the modern conception. Impartiality considers an action to be morally legitimate when it results from the evaluation and approval made by an ideal spectator who takes an impartial point of view. Equity theory guarantees fair, equitable and universal distribution of the benefits of health services. The bioethical phenomenon as a manifestation of an ethical concern, particularly related to the progress of life sciences, is recent in time, but quite diversified in its development. Bioethics is a branch of philosophical ethics, the result of a time, a culture and a civilization, becoming the most dynamic field of the rebirth of ethics and one of the most suggestive sectors of philosophical reflection<sup>12,13,14,15</sup>.

## Conclusion

The study carried out allowed us to infer that the knowledge of bioethics needs to be full, not limited to the general reflection of the principles; physicians, in addition to knowledge of science and technology, will show great evolution with the ethical and moral precepts applied to the profession.

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