

IFCC Code of Ethics 2021

Preamble

The Code of Ethics of the International Federation of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine (IFCC) sets forth the ethical principles and standards by which clinical laboratorians practice their profession. The requirement to practice to the highest achievable ethical standards equally challenges practitioners at all levels of expertise and work experience.

This Code focusses on three targets of duty and is structurally based on the principles delineated in the Belmont Report created in 1978 by the then U.S.A. National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioural Research; its principles also being equally valid for diagnostic medical laboratory work for humans, both then and now.

1. Duty to the Patient

1. Clinical laboratorians are all accountable for the quality and integrity of the laboratory services they provide.
 - a. This obligation includes maintaining individual competence in judgement and performance and striving to safeguard the patient from incompetent, unethical or illegal practice by others.
2. They shall maintain high standards of practice.
 - a. They shall exercise sound judgment in establishing and performing laboratory testing and in its ever-ongoing evaluation.
3. They shall maintain strict confidentiality of patient information and test results and thereby safeguard the dignity and privacy of patients and any samples derived from them.
 - a. They shall provide accurate reports and appropriate interpretation about patients' results to ordering physicians and other appropriate health care practitioners.

2. Duty to Colleagues and the Profession

1. Clinical laboratorians shall uphold and maintain the dignity and respect of their profession and strive to maintain a reputation of honesty, integrity and reliability in all environments, including online.
2. They shall contribute to the advancement of the profession by improving the body of knowledge, adopting scientific advances that benefit the patient, maintaining high standards of practice and education, and seeking safe and fair socio-economic working conditions for all members of the profession.
3. They shall actively strive to establish cooperative and respectful working relationships with other health care practitioners with the primary objective of ensuring a seamlessly high standard of care for the patients they both serve.
4. They shall demonstrate honesty and integrity in business dealings with manufacturers, suppliers, competitors and clients, both clinicians and patients.
5. They should mentor and endeavour to aid young investigators and early career professionals, especially those under their supervision, in their professional development and advancement.

3. Duty to Society

1. As practitioners of an autonomous profession, clinical laboratorians also have a responsibility to contribute from their sphere of professional competence to the general well-being of the community.
2. They shall comply with relevant laws and regulations pertaining to the practice of clinical laboratory medical science. They shall actively seek, within the dictates of their consciences and ability, to change those that do not meet the high standards of care and practice to which the profession is committed.
3. They shall ensure scientifically appropriate, accurate and cost-effective application of clinical laboratory service funding, guarding against waste, particularly clinical futility, inefficiency and needless investigative duplication.

By pledging to actively demonstrate commitment to these principles, and by being led by them, throughout one's professional life, each laboratorian will do their part in guaranteeing the required quality and integrity of the services one's laboratory provides its clinician and patient clients.

Authored by: IFCC Taskforce on Ethics

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