



Ch 4/ part 2



Balancing privacy with public good, (cont'd)

- **To ethically breach confidentiality, these standards must be met:**
- There must be an immediate, apparent, and well-documented threat to public safety or health. Example: a violent psychiatric patient
- The public should be protected without personally identifying the patient or his medical records, Example: a patient with tuberculosis
- The methods for releasing information must cover only the relevant material and not disclose any other private information. Example: a gallbladder operation for a psychiatric patient

Blogging doctors (المدونون الأطباء)

- Social Internet media sites, such as Facebook and professional blogs, are treading on confidentiality.
- How?
- Many doctors blog about their experiences. If a patient is able to identify himself in a blog even if names are not disclosed, there could be legal consequences.
- Many ethicists think that healthcare providers should not be broadcasting troubles with patients or discussing issues in their practices on the Internet. If you feel a need to write about your experiences, keep a personal journal instead.

Confidentiality in Scientific Research

- To develop safe and effective clinical trials:
 - Private information about genetics and any reaction to drugs must be disclosed to researchers to improve treatments and reduce side effects.
- Privacy must be balanced with accuracy in any database used for research. Example: patients fear of discrimination if their genetic info are disclosed to employers or health insurance
- Insurance companies and researchers have the right to know if a treatment leads to good outcomes and then decide if it is worth the cost, both in time and money.



Confidentiality in Scientific Research (cont'd)

- Providers should stress the benefit of patients from scientific research
- Advances in medical research brings benefits for the public good,
- If more people participate in research databases and offer their private information to medical researchers, more successful treatments will be developed.



Clear and Ethical Communications

- Clear communication and understanding is the best predictor of a good Outcome
- Almost 80 percent of the information for an accurate diagnosis comes from what the patient says to her doctor
- Communicating clearly and fairly to the patient respects the patient's autonomy and ties into beneficence.
- Listen carefully, think before you speak, and pay attention to nonverbal cues for better outcomes

Clear and Ethical Communications (cont'd)

- It is important to remember that even though you, as a provider, are comfortable spending every day in a clinic or hospital, this is often an anxiety-provoking experience for patients. >> **White coat hypertension !!!**
- Good communication can definitely be impacted by a patient's emotional state, and this should be recognized and acknowledged.

Communicating with the patients

- Time is a valuable and scarce commodity in the doctor-patient relationship.
- An average visit in a managed-care setting lasts only 15 minutes.
- Healthcare providers need to ask the right questions and then let the patient speak without interrupting.
- In an office visit, you should:
 - Keep track of body language and nonverbal communication.
 - Use open-ended questions rather than questions requiring yes or no answers.

Communicating with the patients (cont'd)

■ In an office visit, you should:

- Develop trust and pay attention to emotional issues.
- Be as specific as possible with a diagnosis and treatment and make sure patients understand them.
- Let the patient know the protocol for delivering test results.
- Offer choices and treatment alternatives.
- Prioritize directions and the order of treatment.
- Treat patients as respected partners in their care.

Body language is important!



- Body language is important in any type of communication. If you sit down when talking with a patient instead of standing, the patient perceives that you are taking more time to talk. Don't answer a pager or cell phone during the visit. Make eye contact with your patient and allow silence in the conversation



Getting information from the patient

- Unless you're psychic, you need to find out the reason for the patient's visit.
- Open-ended questions usually bring the best results. Ask a question like: "What brings you here today, and how can I help you?"
- Be sure that you understand what the patient has told you; then reassure the patient that you understand their concerns.
- You can use the mirroring technique to show the patient that you understand what he's said. Repeat back to the patient his concerns and symptoms, using slightly different language.



Getting information from the patient

- The mirroring technique:
 - Increases patient autonomy
 - Helps a doctor make an accurate diagnosis
 - Lets the patient know that you are listening closely
- Patients often bring up symptoms or concerns at the very end of the visit. These factors can be key to an accurate diagnosis. Don't be in a hurry to leave the examination room.



Making sure the patient understands

- The patient must understand the diagnosis and treatment. But because healthcare providers are trained in medical terminology and patients are often a bit anxious, it can be difficult to communicate in language a patient understands. Translating from medical jargon to lay terms takes skill and practice. You must never just assume that the patient understands a diagnosis or treatment.
- Allow time for the patient to ask questions. Don't assume that because no questions are asked the patient understands what you have said. It may help to use a mirroring technique by asking the patient to repeat the treatment protocol as they understand it.




The interrupting doctor

- A study found that, on average, doctors let a patient describe symptoms and problems for 18 to 23 seconds before interrupting.
- The study found that patients need only six more seconds to complete their story. Only 2 percent of patients complete their tale before diagnosis.
- In addition, most doctors think they take eight to nine minutes explaining treatment, when they really only spoke for one minute.
- More than half of all doctors thought it was important to let patients know test results were normal, but only about one-fourth actually did so.
- Only 30 percent of doctors ask if the patient has any questions at the end of a visit.



Informed consent

- Informed consent, or patient agreement to treatment based upon a clear understanding of the situation and all potential ramifications, is central to the doctor-patient relationship.
- You, the provider, must tell the patient about alternatives to his care and the pros and cons of those treatments and then respect the patient's decision. The ethical dilemma here is between beneficence and autonomy.

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- There are two major exceptions to the **informed consent** rule.
 - You don't need informed consent before performing a simple and common procedure that has little risk, such as a blood test; however, the patient still needs to agree to the procedure.
 - And you do not need patient consent to treat in an emergency life-threatening situation.



Understanding Full Disclosure: Telling the Patient What Matters

- Doctors must be as honest with patients. Selection of information to disclose is an ethical issue.
- Healthcare practitioners should disclose any conflict of interest they have when dealing with patients.
- People have the right to know all of the risks and benefits of their treatment.



Understanding Full Disclosure: Telling the Patient What Matters

- So the patient can make an informed decision, the doctor must tell the patient
 - About his condition
 - What may happen if the condition is not treated
 - About all possible and medically reasonable treatments, including drugs and surgery
 - All the risks and the benefits of these treatments



Decoding conflicts of interest

- A conflict of interest occurs when a healthcare practitioner or any member of his family has a financial interest in pharmaceutical sales, medical equipment, medical research, patient care, or administration
- Good medical practices rely on minimizing bias or conflicts of interest.



Decoding conflicts of interest

- The Association for Medical Ethics has created the Ethical Rules of Disclosure. These rules try to guarantee full and honest disclosure to ensure the best patient care. They are
 - Try to limit bias and conflict of interest. Instead, rely on facts and evidence-based medicine. Always keep the patient's best interest as the first priority.
 - Financial ties and incentives may result in bias.
 - Healthcare providers should disclose the financial interest of more than \$500 per year that might result in perceived or real bias.



Pharmaceutical detailing

- Representatives from drug companies go to doctor's offices to pitch a specific drug.
- These visits keep doctors up to date on new drugs, but you must be aware of the conflicts of interest these visits can create.
- **Dilemma:** Drug samples are new and expensive. Patients get started on these free drug samples that are given in the clinic, but soon have to pay for them when the sample runs out.
- Sometimes a less expensive and equally effective drug is available.
- Some clinics are now prohibiting visits from pharmaceutical reps due to the conflict of interest this creates.
- Electronic detailing, or e-detailing, is now becoming more common because physicians have less time for face-to-face meetings