

MEDICAL ETHICS

Theories of Morality

- 1- virtue ethics theory (Fairness & Justice Theory).
- 2- Kantain theory (Rights and duties). (by Kant ,1724-1804)
- 3- Virtual growth theory Kohlberg, (1927-1987)
- 4- Utilitarianism John Stewart Mill (1806-73)

1- **Virtue ethics theory:** The school of thought formed by Greek philosopher plato and Aristotle (284-322 BCE). Emphasis the importance of personal character and virtue. Character could be developed over time through practice and perfection of virtue. The individual (doctor) who possess more virtues (honesty, compassion, dedication) is more likely to make good decisions and behave ethically.

A virtuous doctor is more likely to be an ethical doctor.

Character of physician should be instructed in the art of healing. He should be patient in caring during his duty without anxiety.

However many factors including upbringing, schooling and religion can influence the development of virtuous character.

This theory contradicts the widespread misconception (the end justifies the means).

Example: good character and intension may be inadequate when faced with a decision to include pediatric patient in a new drug trial.

2- Deontology (Kantian) theory (Rights and duties theory): proposed by Kant (1724-1804) suggests that there is an individual duty (Deno) derived from rules that will determine moral conduct in every situation. It suggests that actions must follow moral law., which has universal application, regardless of situations, desires or interests.

If a person acts rationally of his own free will, according to this moral law or duty, his actions would be morally right.

According to this theory every human being is valuable and deserving respect , human can't be treated as a mean to an ends.

The doctor has specific duties in relation to his profession that should guide his action.

This theory assumed the general principle that good behavior requires respect for people has been asserted in which two types of rights

1- Negative rights means non-interference in the affairs of others.

2 - Positive rights and mean interference in the affairs of others to bring them assistance.

It stressed the pride of autonomy and respect for the rights of others.

3- virtual growth theory: The theory says that the ability of the individual to deal with ethical issues is a process of developing and continuing throughout life and that the behavior of the individual goes through several stages:

The first stage The child learns the right or wrong work from hearing the right or wrong words on the work he is doing or through the grants and awards given to him to commit good work or face the punishment for shameful work.

The second stage is through the loyalty of the individual to a family or a group or country and this behavior will grow successively through their coexistence with them.

Third, individuals who continue to develop their moral foundations that distinguish right from wrong have a global view

4- Utilitarianism John Stewart Mill(1806-73)

This theory evaluates the work according to its results and the correct work is the work that lasts.

The theory promotes good work that benefits the largest number of people and this theory fails to recognize individual rights. Individual rights are violated for the greater number. For example, the theory allows the use of members of a healthy individual to carry out organ transplants for ten patients who need such operations.

This theory supports the prevailing saying ("the end justifies the means")

This theory is useful in evaluating health services and studying performance efficiency and economic feasibility.