



Textbook of Foundation Course and AETCOM for First MBBS Students

*As per the Latest Competency Based
Medical Education Curriculum (NMC)*

2nd
Edition

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Foreword
Vedprakash Mishra



Contents

Section I: Foundation Course

Module 1: Orientation Module

Chapter 1: Introduction to Medical Institution	3
❖ Foundation Course	3
Chapter 2: Role of Doctors in Society	10
❖ Doctor	10
Chapter 3: History of Medicine and Alternate Systems	13
❖ History of Medicine	13
❖ Alternate Systems of Medicine	18
Chapter 4: Role of Indian Medical Graduates and MBBS Curriculum	21
Chapter 5: Principles of Family Practice	27
❖ Family Practice	27

Module 2: Skills Module

Chapter 6: Basic Life Support	30
❖ Basic Life Support	30
Chapter 7: First Aid	37
❖ First Aid	37
Chapter 8: Universal Precautions	43
❖ Healthcare Associated Infection	43
Chapter 9: Waste Management	50
❖ Biomedical Waste (BMW)	50
Chapter 10: Immunization	53
❖ Immunity	53
Chapter 11: Documentation	56
❖ Medical Records—Documentation	56
❖ Medical Records	56

Module 3: Community Orientation Module

Chapter 12: National Health Goals and Policies	59
❖ National Health Policies	59
Chapter 13: Healthcare System and Community Health	62
❖ Healthcare System in India	62
Chapter 14: Interactions with Patients', Families and Communities	65

Module 4: Professional Development and Ethics Module

Chapter 15: Concept of Professionalism and Ethics	70
❖ Professionalism and Ethics	70
Chapter 16: White Coat Ceremony	73
❖ White Coat	73
❖ White Coat Ceremony	73
Chapter 17: Professionalism and Altruistic Behavior	76
❖ Virtues of Physician	76
Chapter 18: Working in Healthcare Team	78
❖ Concept of Team	78
❖ Principles of Healthcare Team	79
❖ Challenges of Teamwork	80

Chapter 19: Disability Competencies	81
❖ Disability	81
❖ Disability Etiquette	83

Chapter 20: Cultural Competence	85
❖ Concept of Culture	85
❖ Cultural Competence	86

Chapter 21: Stress Management	88
❖ Stress	88
❖ Depression and Suicide	89

Chapter 22: Time Management	93
❖ Importance of the Time Management	93

Chapter 23: Interpersonal Relationships	96
<i>Contributors:</i> Dinesh Kumar V, Yogesh Sontakke	
❖ Concept of Interpersonal Relationships	96

Chapter 24: Learning—Study Skills	100
❖ Learning	100

Module 5: Language and Computer Skills Module

Chapter 25: Communication Skills	104
❖ Communication Skill	104

Chapter 26: Local Language Skill	107
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Chapter 27: English Language Learning	110
❖ English as a Language	110
❖ English Writing Style	111
❖ Plagiarism	113

Chapter 28: Basic Computer Skills	115
❖ Basic Computer Skills	115

Section II: Attitudes, Ethics, and Communication (AETCOM)

Chapter 29: What Does it Mean to be a Doctor?	121
❖ Attitude, Ethics, and Communication	121
❖ What Does it Mean to be a Doctor?	122

Chapter 30: What Does it Mean to be a Patient?	130
❖ Patient	130

Chapter 31: Doctor—Patient Relationship	136
❖ Concept of Doctor—Patient Relationship	136
❖ Duties of Doctor Toward Patients	140
❖ Responsibilities of Patient	140
❖ Rights of Patient	140

Chapter 32: Foundation of Communication—1	148
<i>Contributors:</i> Dinesh Kumar V, Yogesh Sontakke	
❖ Communication Skill	148
❖ Listening Skills	151

Chapter 33: Cadaver as Our First Teacher	155
<i>Contributors:</i> Payal Kasat, Yogesh Sontakke	

<i>Annexure: Anatomy Act</i>	163
❖ History of Anatomy Acts	163

<i>Index</i>	167
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Module 4: Professional Development and Ethics Module

CHAPTER

15

Concept of Professionalism and Ethics

COMPETENCY

FC4.1: Demonstrate understanding of the concept of professionalism and ethics among healthcare professionals and discuss the consequences of unprofessional and unethical behavior.

SPECIFIC LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of the chapter, the student should be able to:

- ▶ Explain the concept of professionalism and ethics among healthcare professionals
- ▶ Describe the consequences of unprofessional and unethical behavior

PROFESSIONALISM AND ETHICS

- ❖ Currently, there are several occasions in the medical profession for lack of accountability and unprofessionalism.
- ❖ It is needed for IMG to understand medical professionalism and the concerns of medicals of ethics.
- ❖ *Profession* is an occupation of an individual who has skills and knowledge required to practice an art (*profession* = to take vows, in Latin).
- ❖ Medical professionals possess knowledge and skills of body, disease, treatment, prevention and care. He/she is able to work independently or in organization. He/she follows the code of ethics and moral values.
- ❖ *Medical ethics* are the moral principles that guide the medical professional in the practice of medicine and the laws of obligation for the physicians towards their patients and other members of medical profession.
- ❖ First draft of medical ethics was prepared by Thomas Percival (English Physician, 1803)
- ❖ *American Medical Association* adopted the code of medical ethics in 1847.
- ❖ *Declaration of Geneva* was adopted in 1948.
- ❖ *Nuremberg Code of Research Ethics* (1946) defined duties and responsibilities of medical research and involved voluntary consent to participate.
- ❖ *World Medical Association* (Helsinki declaration, 1964 revised in 1975 and 1983) provided guidelines of medical ethics for medical research, voluntary informed consent, and inclusion of review committee for medical ethics.
- ❖ *Indian Medical Council Regulations*, 2002 for professional conduct, etiquette and ethics laid down regulations of medical ethics and obligations of the physician towards their patients and other medical professionals.

MESSAGE TO STUDENTS

- Professional and ethical behavior is an essential component of the medical profession. Always respect your patients and other healthcare workers.
- Professional competence is important. It includes ethical use of communication, knowledge, skills, and emotions in routine clinical practice.

Historical Aspects of Medical Ethics

- ❖ *Code of Hammurabi* (2200 BC) was a recognized medical ethics and considered its violation as punishable by laws.
- ❖ *Hippocratic oath* (4th century BC) gave new dimensions to medical ethics.

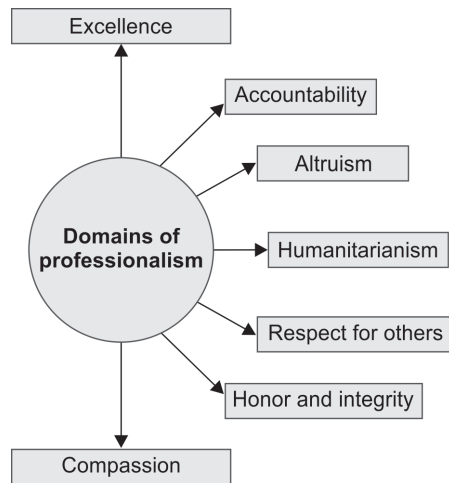


Fig. 15.1: Domains of professionalism for Indian Medical Graduates.

Qualities of Professional Physician

- ❖ Professionalism in medicine is a holistic construct to care for the society. The medical practitioner should demonstrate following professional qualities (Fig. 15.1):
 - Professional competence
 - Honesty with patients and colleagues
 - Patient confidentiality
 - Maintaining appropriate relations with patients and colleagues
 - Improving access and quality of care
 - Acquiring new knowledge and skills
 - Manage conflict of interest
- ❖ While serving society, always abide by the court laws and constitution.
- ❖ The domains of professionalism for Indian Medical Graduates are as follows:
 - Excellence
 - Accountability
 - Altruism
 - Humanitarianism
 - Respect for others
 - Honor and integrity
 - Compassion
- ❖ These domains are not for literature purposes. They have to be acquired as lifestyle for medical practitioners.

Unprofessional Behavior

Q. What is unprofessional behavior?

- ❖ Understanding unprofessional behavior is important to remain away from such practices. As a medical healthcare worker, humanity is the priority. Life of patients is most precious.
- ❖ Some unprofessional behaviors are as follows:
 - Refusing to treat a patient due to his religion, caste, nationality, criminal record, and so on.

- Practicing the skill for which you are not permitted or trained
- Practicing medicine without registering with medical council
- Unethical practices such as sex detection, abortions of female fetuses.
- Disrespect to patients and other healthcare workers
- Negligence during practice
- Prescribing specific brand or drug
- Advising diagnostic test which is not required
- Referring to specific center to get benefits
- Performing surgery or other procedures without obtaining informed consent
- Performing clinical examination of a female by a male practitioner in absence of female attendant
- Hiding a medicolegal case or facts from police or court of law
- Improper maintenance of medical records
- Accepting gifts or benefits from pharmaceutical companies for prescribing their drugs.

Consequences of Unprofessional and Unethical Behavior

Unprofessional and unethical behavior of the medical practitioner has the following effects:

- ❖ Impact on patient
- ❖ Impact on society
- ❖ Impact on self.

Impact on Patient

- ❖ Unprofessional behavior of the medical practitioner impacts primary a patient.
- ❖ It affects health, infections, loss of body function or part and even may lead to death of a patient. It also increases expenses of the patient which impacts his/her post-treatment life.

Impact on Society

Malpractices by medical practitioners impact the health of society. It may result in spread of infection in society. It may even compromise national health policy.

Impact on Self

Unethical practices may result in facing the practitioner in a case of professional misconduct or negligence. He/she may undergo trial in a court of law and medical council may remove his name from the register.

Misconduct

Q. What is misconduct?

- ❖ According to National Medical Commission, professional misconduct may result in disciplinary action.
- ❖ If a practitioner commits any violations of regulations laid by NMC which includes the following:

- Does not maintain medical records of his/her patients for three years.
 - Does not display his/her medical council registration number in clinics, prescriptions and certificates.
 - *Adultery or improper conduct*: Above professional position by committing adultery or improper conduct with patients
 - Conviction by court of law for offense involving moral turpitude or criminal acts
 - Involving in sex determination tests
 - Issuing improper, misleading, untrue medical certificate
 - Prescribing unnecessary or prohibited drugs
 - Performing or enabling illegal operation
 - Advertising himself or splicing practice through press articles or interviews regarding diseases and treatments
 - Disclosing secrets of patients except in a court of law under orders of presiding judge and modifiable disease or if there is a risk to a specific person and or community
 - Refusing to treat patients based on religious grounds
 - Performing clinical drug trials without approval or consent participate.
- (For details, refer Rules and Regulations, Code of Medical Ethics Regulations, 2002 at www.nmc.org.in)

Consequences of Professional Misconduct

- ❖ Violations of rules and regulations laid for codes of medical ethics by the government render the practitioner liable for punishment and disciplinary actions.

- ❖ Medical council has to consider and decide upon the facts about the professional misconduct. The medical council would hold an inquiry and give opportunity to registered medical practitioners to be heard person or by pleader.
- ❖ If medical practitioner is found guilty of professional misconduct, the medical council may award the following punishment:
 - May restrain the physician from performing practice or procedure that is under scrutiny
 - Removal from the register for a limited period
 - Deletion from the register permanently.

MESSAGE TO STUDENTS

Follow the humanity and ethics while practicing medicine. Believe yourself and think about well-being of your patient and society.

REVIEW TEST

Scan the following QR code for MCQ test:



Or use the following link:
<https://forms.gle/SFsmXsRm9k8ueYuX9>

CRITICAL HIGHLIGHTS FOR STUDENTS

- ❑ A doctor's greatest asset integrity.
- ❑ Always keep in mind that patients trust doctors with their lives.
- ❑ Being a great doctor is not only treating illness, but also respecting humanity.
- ❑ The white coat represents responsibility, compassion, and lifelong learning.
- ❑ Honesty with patients is the foundation of medical practice.
- ❑ Respect for patients, colleagues, and the profession is what defines a true physician.
- ❑ Medical negligence and misconduct do not just break laws—they break lives.

Textbook of Foundation Course and AETCOM

The second edition of *Textbook of Foundation Course and AETCOM* is revised to refine and expand the content to meet the evolving needs of undergraduate medical education under the latest Competency-Based Medical Education (CBME) curriculum. The content is updated to make it more comprehensive and aligned with the latest guidelines and expectations for the Indian Medical Graduate (IMG).

This edition is written in simple language and focuses on facilitating the formation of a strong foundation. Specific learning objectives (SLOs) and specific learning competencies, messages, and critical highlights for students are key features of this book. They will help the learners overcome the field's challenges and demonstrate the professional and humanistic attributes.

The main topics covered in this book are as follows:

- Roles of doctors in society
- Doctor–patient relationship
- Cadaver as the first teacher
- Stress and time management, communication skills
- Family practice, national health goals and policies, and healthcare delivery system
- Basic life support, first aid, universal precautions, waste management, immunization, and documentation
- Professionalism and ethics, professional and altruistic behavior, disability competencies, cultural competence, interpersonal relationship

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