

TAKE-HOME NOTES:

Probity in professional practice: Part 1

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In this module, we have looked at the measures psychiatrists must take in order to maintain and justify the trust that society places in them.

We have explored:

- the varied roles and authority of employers, the Royal College of Psychiatrists and the GMC
- guidance from the GMC and other governing bodies of the medical profession
- the duty of doctors to be open and honest with their patients, employers and contractors of care
- situations to avoid conflicts of interest and maintain high professional standards.

Guidance was given on:

- providing and publishing information about services
- writing references, reports, CVs, and signing documents
- giving evidence as a professional/expert witness to various bodies

Finally, we looked at:

- financial and commercial dealings
- relationships with organisations providing care and/or treatment
- recommending services outside the National Health Service (NHS)
- a definition of sponsorship
- the relationship between individual psychiatrists, the pharmaceutical industry and other commercial organisations.

Reflection

(3.6) On discharge from hospital, one of your patients with a diagnosis of bipolar affective disorder would like to give you a gift in honour of your kindness and care provided. What do you think would be the best way to deal with this situation?

(3.9) You are an in-patient consultant. One of your informal patients is non-compliant with the treatment. You are aware that his mental health will deteriorate if not provided with appropriate treatment. You request a Mental Health Act assessment and join the assessment team. Would you ask for payment in participating in the assessment? What would be your justification of charging or not charging the fee?

(4.3) You saw a depressed lady as an out-patient four weeks ago and prescribed mirtazapine. During her follow up visit, she tells you that she had developed arthralgia over the past fortnight. She thought that she might be developing serious arthritis as a result of the antidepressant. She complains to you and asks why she was not informed about this particular side-effect. How will you deal with the patient's complaint? What steps might you take so that a similar problem could be avoided in future?

(4.8) You are asked to prepare a report for a psychiatric patient making an insurance claim. You feel that the claim has no merit. How would you proceed?

(5.8) You are invited to attend a drug company-sponsored meeting abroad. Under what terms do you think you should agree to attend this meeting?

References

Advertising Standards Agency (2010). [\[website\]](#)

Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry (ABPI) Code of Practice (2010). [\[PDF\]](#)

British Medical Association (2004) Medical Certificates and Reports. [\[website\]](#)

Department of Health (2007) Positive Steps: Supporting Race Equality in Mental Healthcare. [\[PDF\]](#)

Department of Health (2005) Research Governance Framework for Health and Social Care. [\[PDF\]](#)

Department of Health (2005) Maintaining High Standards in the Modern NHS. [\[PDF\]](#)

Department of Health (2000) Commercial Sponsorship Ethical Standards for the NHS. [\[PDF\]](#)

European Medical Writers Association. [\[website\]](#)

General Medical Council (2004) Confidentiality: Protecting & providing information. [\[PDF\]](#)

General Medical Council (2006) Good Practice in Prescribing Medicines. [\[PDF\]](#)

General Medical Council (2006) Guidance on Conflict of Interest . [\[PDF\]](#)

General Medical Council (2006) Good Medical Practice. [\[PDF\]](#)

General Medical Practice (2006) Guidance on reporting convictions. Reporting criminal and regulatory proceedings within and outside the U.K. [\[PDF\]](#)

General Medical Council (2006) Conflicts of interest. [\[PDF\]](#)

General Medical Council (2006) Maintaining boundaries. [\[PDF\]](#)

General Medical Council (2006) Raising concerns about patient safety. [\[website\]](#)

General Medical Council (2006) Guidance for doctors using registered name and GMC reference numbers. [\[website\]](#)

General Medical Council (2006) Valuing diversity. [\[website\]](#)

General Medical Council (2005) The meaning of fitness to practise. [\[PDF\]](#)

General Medical Council (2005) Indicative sanctions guidance for fitness to practise panels. [\[PDF\]](#)

General Medical Council (2005) Referring a doctor to the GMC: a guide for individual doctors, medical directors and clinical governance managers. [\[website\]](#)

General Medical Council (2004) Confidentiality: protecting and providing information. [\[PDF\]](#)

Medicines and healthcare products regulatory agency (2005) The Blue Guide: Advertising and Promotion of Medicine in the U.K. [\[website\]](#)

National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) [\[website\]](#)

NHS Quality Improvement Scotland (2010) [\[website\]](#)

Royal College of Psychiatrists (2009) Good Psychiatric Practice. [\[PDF\]](#)

Royal College of Psychiatrists (2007) Vulnerable patients, safe doctors: Good practice in our clinical relationships. College Report CR146. [\[PDF\]](#)

Royal College of Psychiatrist (2008) Good Psychiatric Practice: Relationships with pharmaceutical and other commercial organisations. [\[PDF\]](#)

Royal College of Psychiatrists (2006) Good Psychiatric Practice: Confidentiality and information sharing. Council Report CR133. [\[PDF\]](#)

Royal College of Psychiatrists (2004) Good Psychiatric Practice (2nd Edn). College Reports CR125

Royal College of Psychiatrists (2001) Guidance for researchers and for ethics committees on psychiatric research involving human participants. College report CR82. [\[PDF\]](#)

Scottish Executive Health Department (2006) Research governance framework for health and community care. [\[PDF\]](#)

The Committee on Standards in Public Life (the Nolan Committee) (2010). [\[website\]](#)

Further reading

European Medical Writers Association (2010) Guidance on professional and ethical working standards. [\[website\]](#)

International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (IMJCE) (2010) Obligation to Register Clinical Trials. [\[website\]](#)

Sources of further help and support

British Medical Association
BMA House, Tavistock Square
London WC1H 9JP
Tel: 020 7387 4499
<http://www.bma.org.uk/>

General Medical Council
St James Buildings, 79 Oxford Street
Manchester M1 6FQ
Tel: 0845 357 8001
<http://www.gmc-uk.org/>

Hospital Consultants and Specialists Association
1 Kingsclere Road, Overton, Basingstoke
Hants RG25 3JA
Tel: 012 5677 1777
Email: conspec@hcsa.com

Medical and Dental Defence Union of Scotland
Mackintosh House, 120 Blythswood Street
Glasgow G2 4EA
Tel: 0141 221 5858
<http://www.mddus.co.uk/>

Medical Defence Union Limited
230 Blackfriars Road
London SE1 8PJ
Tel: 020 7202 1500
<http://www.the-mdu.com/>

Medical Protection Society
33 Cavendish Square
London W1G 0PS
Tel: 020 7637 0541
<http://www.mps.org.uk/>

National Clinical Assessment Service (NCAS)
1st Floor, Market Towers, 1 Nine Elms Lane
London SW8 5NQ
24-hour emergency contact: 020 7062 1655
Email: <mailto:madvice.service@ncas.nhs.uk>
www.ncas.npsa.nhs.uk

NHS Counter fraud and Security Management Service
Weston House, 246 High Holborn
London WC1V 7EX
Tel: 020 7895 4500
<http://www.cfsms.nhs.uk/>

Psychiatrists Support Service
Royal College of Psychiatrists
17 Belgrave Square
London SW1X 8PG
Tel: 020 7245 0412
Email: psychiatristssupportservice@rcpsych.ac.uk