

JARAMOGI OGINGA ODINGA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
UNIVERSITY EXAMINATION 2013/2014
1ST YEAR 1ST SEMESTER EXAMINATION FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF
PUBLIC HEALTH

KISUMU LEARNING CENTER

COURSE CODE: HES 5111

TITLE: BIOETHICS

DATE: TIME:

DURATION:

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. This paper contains six questions**
- 2. Answer Question 1 (compulsory) and ANY other 3 questions**
- 3. Write all answers in the booklet provided.**

1. For each of the following scenarios, decide whether in each scenario the health care practitioner's conduct amounted to medical malpractice or professional negligence, and whether their employer can be held vicariously liable.

- I. A doctor does not inform the wife of a patient, about her husband's contagious venereal disease
(4 MARKS)
- II. A nurse at a rape crisis clinic shouts out to a patient that they 'do not do abortions on schoolgirls'.(4 MARKS)
- III. A surgeon operates on a patient without obtaining an informed consent.(4 MARKS)
- IV. A psychiatrist does not warn the husband of a patient that his wife has threatened to kill him. (4 MARKS)
- V. A doctor prescribes the wrong drug for a patient and the patient becomes severely ill.(4 MARKS)

2. Case description

Dr. DL is the only doctor serving a small suburban community. Dr. DL is treating JT, the 22 year old son of the T family, for active venereal infection, which JT says he probably contracted in his relationship with a person in a nearby town. On testing JT, Dr. DL has found no evidence that he has contracted HIV infection. When Dr. DL's patient, Mr. MA, is in the doctor's office for treatment, he informs Dr. DL that his daughter, aged 17, is to marry JT in two months' time, and asks Dr. DL whether there is any health information about JT, who MA knows is a patient of Dr. DL's, which his daughter should know.

Q. Following the 5 steps of moral reasoning, discuss the competing ethical principles in the case and conclude whether the doctor should inform Mr. MA of JT's previous venereal infection.

3. There are several groups of people who are unable to exert their autonomy when making decisions about their health.

(I) How should decisions be made for the following groups of people and who should make them?

- A. A child lives in an area where polio is prevalent but her parents refuse vaccination as they believe it is poison. (4 MARKS)
- B. A 24 year old immigrant man with Guillain-Barre syndrome is trapped in his body, unable to speak or move. There is a very good chance he will improve with treatment but this will take months to years. His mother wishes to take him back to his home country as she is convinced he is going to die. However, you suspect that this country will not have the resources to provide adequate treatment. (6 MARKS)
- C. A man with longterm mental illness and has no known family is admitted to hospital for major surgery (4 MARKS)

(II). Describe the categories of limited autonomy (patient incompetency) that the groups in A-C above belong to, and the ethical principles applied for their consenting. (6 MARKS)

4.

(I) Case description: A patient is bleeding profusely post-operatively. He is sedated and partially unaware of his surroundings. The patient, who has strong religious convictions, informed the doctor prior to the operation that he did not want a blood transfusion under any circumstances, stating that this is a “fate worse than death” according to his religion. The doctor predicts that without blood he will die and gives three units of blood to the patient, plus multiple blood products designed to aid clotting. Three weeks later the patient is discharged with his spouse and three children, fully recovered from his operation. The patient is never informed of the transfusions given whilst he was sedated.

Discuss the following questions based on the case above:

- A. Keeping in mind that a blood transfusion is a “fate worse than death” for this patient, did the end justify the means? (5 MARKS)
- B. What is good about paternalism? (5 MARKS)
- C. What is bad about autonomy? (5 MARKS)

(II) Case description: Fifty year old psychiatrist hires a patient to clean her apartment. At the same time she is treating the patient for phobias with hypnosis after returning home in the evenings. The arrangement for her cleaning work was intended to provide a kind of ‘payment’ for the treatment she could not afford otherwise.

- A. Identify the ethical issues in the case (5 MARKS)

5. Discuss the following statements and provide arguments for a positive as well as negative reply:

- A. Every competent adult has the right to refuse unwanted medical treatment. (6 MARKS)
- B. Is this right valid in a case of a pregnant woman who is refusing medical treatment for an illness that might impact the foetus? (7 MARKS)

C. Does a soldier have the right to refuse medical treatment that would render him/her to return to active duty? (7 MARKS)

6. For each of the following statements, make a decision and explain your decision making process, and indicate what is your influence in making that decision.

A. Your sibling has meningitis and is currently on a ventilator. Even if they survive they will certainly be severely disabled, both physically and mentally. Your parents ask you if you think continuing treatment is appropriate and demand an answer. What do you say? (7 MARKS)

B. Your mother has kidney failure and the only compatible donor is your mentally handicapped sister who is terrified of doctors and hospitals. You have to consent or decline on her behalf. (7 MARKS)

C. You are offered a full genetic screen on your child, including diseases they may not actually develop but have a predisposition for. Do you say yes? (6 MARKS)