

MEDICAL ETHICS IN *BRIHAT-TRAYI* TEXTSDr. Sarveshkumar R. Tiwari*¹ and Dr. G. H. Kodwani²

¹MD Scholar, Department of Rog Nidan Avum Vikruti Vigyan, Govt Ayurved College
Nagpur.

²HOD and Professor Department of Rog Nidan Avum Vikruti Vigyan, Govt Ayurved College
Nagpur.

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***Corresponding Author**

**Dr. Sarveshkumar R.
Tiwari**

MD Scholar, Department of
Rog Nidan Avum Vikruti
Vigyan, Govt Ayurved
College Nagpur.

ABSTRACT

Introduction: Ethics is important for various medical research conducted on human subjects and it is necessary to adopt it in clinical practice also. ICMR, India(1980) has made 12 general ethical guidelines for this, but these guidelines have been mentioned directly or indirectly in *Ayurveda Brihat Trayi* texts thousands of years ago. In this article, the ethics described in *Brihat Trayi* texts as per general ethical guidelines of ICMR, India are being discussed. **Aim:** To study the Medical ethics explained in *Brihat Trayi* Texts. **Objectives:** 1) To study the various ethical guidelines mentioned in *Brihat Trayi* Texts. 2) To study the 12 general ethical guidelines of ICMR, India(1980).

Material and Methods: For this study *Charak samhita*, *Sushrut*

Samhita and *Ashtang Hriday* and available commentaries on it are used. **Conclusion:** Every ethical guidelines mentioned in the *Brihat Trayi* texts are eligible for conduct, out of which ICMR, India has also included many ethical principles in their guidelines.

KEYWORDS: *Ayurveda*, *Brihat Trayi*, Ethics, Ethical guideline, ICMR.

INTRODUCTION

Ethics, also called moral philosophy, the discipline concerned with what is morally good or bad and morally right or wrong.^[1]

Ethics is important for medical research trials perform on human subjects and also an important part of clinical practice, which the doctor must be put into practice while examining the patient. Because the physician has an ethical obligation to

- a. Benefit the patient,
- b. Avoid or minimize harm and
- c. Respecting the patient's values and self respect.

Ayurveda is an “*Upanga of Atharvaveda*”. In which not only treatment related, but also the way of living an ideal life has been described. In *Ayurveda*, *Charak Samhita*, *Sushrut Samhita* and *Ashtanga Hridaya* are included under *Brihat Trayi Grantha's*.

Trials done on human participants after 2nd World War(1939- 1945) without their consent and exposing them to grave risk of death or permanent physical disability raised grave concern about subjecting human subjects to medical research. Thus the first international statement on the ethics of medical research using human subjects namely, the Nuremberg code was formulated in 1947.

Nowadays, hospitals has been run under the rules of industry, due to this the ethics of the doctor towards the patient is getting destroyed. Keeping this in mind, it was necessary for World Medical Association(WMA) to make separate ethical guidelines like Declaration of Helsinki. In ancient times, *Rishi* were called those who used to work for public welfare by being motivated by selflessness and their work was called “*Rishi Archana*”. Therefore, at that time *Vaidya Rishi* used to do *chikitsa karma* inspired by the spirit of public welfare, his behaviour was not immoral towards the patient. This was the reason that there is no separate description of ethics in *Ayurveda Brihat Trayi* texts, but directly or indirectly some ethics have been described in *Brihat Trayi* texts.

In this article the ethics described in *Brihat Trayi* texts are being discussed.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This is conceptual type of research. All sorts of references has been collected and compiles from *Brihat Trayi* texts that is *Charak Samhita*, *Sushrut Samhita* and *Ashtang Hridaya* and available commentaries on it. All the following matters are analysed for the discussion and attempt has been made to draw some conclusion.

There are various ethical *sutras* are explained in *Brihat Trayi* texts as per 12 general ethical guidelines of ICMR, India.

1. Principle of precaution and risk minimization

In *Charak Samhita*, it is mentioned that the physician should consider all his patients as his own son, protect them sincerely from all the ailments, wishing the excellent piety.^[2]

In *Sushruta Samhita*, it is mentioned that a patient lives with a doubtful mind even among parents, sons and brothers, but has full faith in the doctor and leaves his body in the trust of doctors, does not doubt him in anyway, that is why the ideal *Vaidya* should treat the patient like his son.^[3]

2. Principle of maximization of public interest and of distributive justice

Vaidya should try to provide health to the patients and all creatures by all means. Never betray a patient for your livelihood (even if the poor patient is not able to pay his fees).^[4]

3. Principle of privacy and confidentiality

The matters of patient's family should never be revealed outside, in spite of fact that you know the diminution in life span of patient you should not specify it where it is liable to cause harm to the patient or others.^[5]

4. Principle of accountability and transparency

Vaidya should not think bad about other's property even in imagination. *Vaidya* should not treat the woman in absence of their husbands or guardians. *Vaidya* should not accept meat provided by women without permission of their husband or guardians.^[6]

Vaidya should be prohibited from sitting on the seat with women, staying with them and making fun of them. Apart from food, *Vaidya* should not take anything given by other.^[7]

5. Principle of professional competence

Learning, rationality, specific scientific knowledge, memory, devotion to performing timely duties and action (clinical practice) - one who possess these six qualities, nothing remains unachievable for those *Vaidyas*.^[8]

Vaidya should be soft spoken, talking flawless, righteous, blissful, thankful, truthful, useful and measured statements keeping in mind place and time with good remembrance, striving constantly for knowledge, progress and excellence of equipments (medicine etc.).^[9]

6. Principle of totality of responsibility

Friendliness, compassion, towards the disease attachment to remediable and indifference to those who are moving towards the end.^[10]

7. Principle of public domain

A physician should discuss with other physician. Discussion with expert, promotes pursuit and advancement of knowledge provides dexterity, improves power of speaking, illumines fame, removes doubts in scriptures, if any, by repeatedly listening the topics and creates confidence with doubtless knowledge.^[11]

8. Doctors duty to the poor patient and respected person

Brahmins, gurus, poor people, friends, sanyasi's, people who come with humility, sadhus, orphans and visitors should be treated with *Vaidya's* own medicines like their brothers. But those who trap animals and sinners should not be treated.^[12]

DISCUSSION

The *Brihat Trayi* texts has many other important ethics like this. But the 12 ethical guidelines of ICMR, India and which are also necessary in today's period have been described in this article. This shows that *Ayurveda* is not just a science of medicine, but it is actually a science of life and behaviour. In *Ayurveda*, directly or indirectly, the *Guru* has been teaching ethics to the *Shishya*. However, in that period, considering medicine as an obligations, with a pure heart, the patient without greed was treated, so ethics were not taught in a special manner separately or no other separate focus on formulation of ethical guidelines for *Vaidyas*. But nowadays, due to greed, unethical behaviour has increased, due to which formulation of ethical guidelines has got special importance.

CONCLUSION

The ethical guidelines mentioned in *Ayurveda* are adhered to even today. Thousands of years ago, many ethical principles have been described in the *Brihat Trayi* texts, which have become necessary to learn for Medical students and Doctors. Every ethical guidelines mentioned in the *Brihat Trayi* texts are eligible for conduct, out of which ICMR, India has also included many ethical principles in their guidelines.

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