

OsEAN Open Forum 2016 - “Teaching the Soft Skills”, Vienna

# What do students know about Professionalism and Ethics? Toward a teaching model

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# Goals

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- To exchange ideas about how to teach ethics and professionalism to osteopathy students
- To come up with innovative teaching strategies in this field

# Introduction

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- The question: What do students really know about ethics and professionalism?
- Hypothesis:
  - They know way more than we think.
  - Collectively they know almost all they'll need to know to be an ethical and professional health care provider

# Background

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- McGill University in the BSc. Program of Physical Therapy: a semester in Ethics and Professionalism(1980). The course that marked my career as a health professional
- Started teaching Osteopathy in Croatia in 2001
  - The topic of ethics and professionalism was not at the top of the teaching plan initially
  - Over the years more discussion on the topic of ethics and professionalism, motivated by certain events reported in the media and students' experiences in their institutions

# Examples of unethical behaviour in some hospitals, private practices in Zagreb

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- Patients will get a sought after spot for their child in the rehabilitation department (paid by the government) if they agree to have private, out of pocket, treatment by the physiotherapists.
- Doctors will take bribes from patients to decrease the waiting time for operations
- Doctors are known to do up to 13, 3-D USs on pregnant women without explaining any benefit to the woman. Often these pictures are published or used at conferences without the woman's consent.

# Background

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Trigger for a more profound discussion on ethics and professionalism

- Certain unethical and unprofessional behaviour by some of our students as reported by: patients, osteopaths, fellow students
- Examples:
  - Students calling themselves osteopaths on their websites as well as in the presence of their patients or other health professionals even though they were not
  - Students promising patients more than they could deliver
  - Overcharging the patients for the treatments.
- There were other behaviours that added with the above were reasons to sound an alarm.

# Background

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- It was time to discuss ethics and professionalism in a more profound way.
- To hire an ethicist or not?
- Teaching the topic of ethics and professionalism in the context of the larger society
- As in many post communist countries there is quite a lot of corruption in Croatia. In fact, at every level of the Croatian society corruption is present whether it be in politics, sport, medicine, university , business and so on. Newspapers report almost daily on various corruption scandals.

# Background

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- Corruption in government and institutions can and does trickle down to the society at large.
- If we look at the perception of corruption index, we see that countries with a long democratic traditions have a lower level of corruption than emerging democracies
- **It should be noted that In my experience with students in Croatia I found them to be, on an individual level, as honest and as ethical as any student I taught in Canada or Switzerland or Germany.**



# Corruption perception index: <http://www.transparency.org/cpi2015>

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- A country or territory's score indicates the perceived level of public sector corruption on a scale of 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean).
- A country's rank indicates its position relative to the other countries in the index. This year's(2015) index includes 168 countries and territories.

# TABLE OF RESULTS: CORRUPTION PERCEPTIONS INDEX 2015

Rank	Country/territory	2015 Score	2014 Score	2013 Score	2012 Score
1	Denmark	91	92	91	90
2	Finland	90	89	89	90
3	Sweden	89	87	89	88
4	New Zealand	88	91	91	90
5	Netherlands	87	83	83	84
5	Norway	87	86	86	85
7	Switzerland	86	86	85	86
9	Canada	83	81	81	84

# TABLE OF RESULTS: CORRUPTION PERCEPTIONS INDEX 2015

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16	Austria	76	72	69	69
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16	United States	76	74	73	73
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18	Ireland	75	74	72	69
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# TABLE OF RESULTS: CORRUPTION PERCEPTIONS INDEX 2015

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23	France	70	69	71	71	36	Spain	58	60	59	65
28	Portugal	63	63	62	63	37	Czech Republic	56	51	48	49
30	Poland	62	61	60	58						

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# TABLE OF RESULTS: CORRUPTION PERCEPTIONS INDEX 2015

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50	Croatia	51	48	48	46
50	Hungary	51	54	54	55
50	Slovakia	51	50	47	46
58	Greece	46	43	40	36
61	Italy	44	43	43	42

119	Russia	29	27	28	28
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# How to teach it?

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- Students already know right from wrong and they have at least basic notions of professionalism so I don't have to teach them that but I have to tease out that knowledge by asking the following questions in the exam:
- 1. Give a definition of ethics and examples of ethical and non ethical behaviour.
- 2. Give a definition of professionalism and examples of professional and non professional behaviour.
- 3 I also gave them real case examples and asked them to identify the behaviour as non-ethical or non-professional and to justify their answer.
- 4. I repeated these questions with different examples in at least 3 exams.
- Working in groups of four students, they tackled the definitions of ethics and professionalism as well as examples. A lively discussion in the group and then in the classroom ensued.

# Goals of this approach

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- Was for the students to work together and to learn from each other
- According to Jonathan Parsons who taught the seminar on clinical teaching in Antwerp , peer to peer learning is more effective than lectures given by teachers.
- Raising awareness of ethics and professionalism from a passive knowledge to the application of it in daily life, be it in school, at work or at home.

# Meaning of Ethics:

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[www.merriam-webster.com](http://www.merriam-webster.com)

- Rules or behaviour based on ideas about what is morally good or bad
- An area of study that deals with ideas about what is good or bad behaviour: a branch of philosophy dealing with what is morally right or wrong
- A belief that something is very important eg. Work ethic

[www.dictionary.cambridge.org](http://www.dictionary.cambridge.org)

- Ethic: A system of accepted beliefs that control behaviour, especially such a system based on morals
- Ethics: the study of what is morally right and what is not



# Ethics

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[www. Scu.edu](http://www.Scu.edu)

- Ethics refers to well-founded standards of right and wrong that prescribe what humans ought to do , usually in terms of rights, obligations and benefits to society, fairness or specific virtues.
- Ethics, for example, refers to those standards that impose the reasonable obligation to refrain from rape, stealing, murder, assault , slander and fraud.
- Ethical standards also include those that enjoy virtues of honesty compassion and loyalty
- Ethical standards also include standards relating to rights , such as the right to life, the right to freedom from injury and the right to privacy.

# Meaning of Professionalism

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[www.merriam-webster.com](http://www.merriam-webster.com)

The skill, good judgement and polite behavior that is expected from a person who is trained to do a job well

The conduct, aims or qualities that characterize or mark a profession or a professional person (professional)

The following of a profession for gain or livelihood

[www.vocabulary.com](http://www.vocabulary.com)

Methods, characteristics and attitudes of a person holding a job that requires higher education and advanced training

A type of behaviour you would expect from a professional person.

- Ex.: showing up to work on time, and focusing on the task at hand, not fighting with your co-workers

The expertness characteristic of a professional person

- **Expertness:** or expertise: skillfulness by virtue of possessing special knowledge

# New Student 1

## ETHICS

### **Examples of non ethical behaviour:**

- Giving patient a therapy that cannot help , might even harm and then billing them for that
- Having knowledge which could help the patient but not sharing it with patient
- Unethical to say in a rough way the patient may know that it could hurt
- Not supporting the patient in his/her healing process
- Not looking optimistically towards the patient's healing

## PROFESSIONALISM

Using their expert knowledge for the betterment of the patient

Not to enter the personal sphere of the patient

Respect other health professionals and not belittle them in front of the patient

### **Non-professional behaviour:**

- Giving patient's health information to a third party
- Talking to the patient about your private life (children, spouse)
- Having knowledge but not using it for the best purpose
- Coming to the clinic unprepared as related to clothing, hygiene
- Teaching the knowledge or skills of your profession to non-health professionals

# New Student 2

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## ETHICS

A philosophy which studies human behaviour

### **Non-ethical behaviour:**

Intimacy between practitioner and patient

Personal/intimate questions asked by patient or practitioner

discrimination

## PROFESSIONALISM

A form of organization of labour

### **Non-professional behaviour**

Unacceptable apparel

Coming late for work

Lack of cleanliness

# • New Student 3

## ETHICS

Knowledge of morality

Ethics is the manner in which we create a contact with another individual on the level of wants, emotions and needs of that person

Ethics allows a relationship on a deeper level

### **Non-ethical behaviour**

Blame

Intolerance of other races, gender, age etc.

Ignoring the psychological state or physical pain that the other person feels

Not willing to adapt your approach to the needs of the individual

Refusal to help in an emergency

## PROFESSIONALISM

All that affects the competency of the individual, attitude towards his/her profession, colleagues and clients.

### **Non-professional behaviour**

Poor hygiene

Refusal to for on going education and professional improvement

Disrespect of the property of the institution.

Disrespect of colleagues

Disrespect of the profession

# New Student 4

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## ETHICS

Ethics concerns itself with morality and moral norms.

### **Non-ethical behaviour:**

Promiscuity, delinquent behaviour

Poor attitude towards people, nature

Undermining and manipulation in a work situation in order to achieve certain goals.

## PROFESSIONALISM

Is our attitude towards our profession and the people we encounter in our profession. It is our attitude towards our field of expertise which allows us to work and have financial security.

Therefore we have to be “professional” towards our colleagues and patients

### **Examples:**

Do not get too personal with patients

Do not share with others the patient’s information and diagnosis

We should prepare our self for the patient, study their case

Brush up on our knowledge if necessary

# Students in the mid-way point in their studies : group of 4

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## EXAMPLES OF NON-ETHICAL BEHAVIOUR

Treating patients whose problems are beyond our competencies

Treating a patient who had no prior consultation with a physician even though the patient has a family history of cardiac problems

Refusal to treat a patient based on race, nationality, religion, sexual orientation

Sharing patient's information of their problems and personal stories with others

Encouraging the patient to come for unnecessary treatment for our financial gain

## PROFESSIONALISM

Examples:

Consulting with colleagues and doctors if we deem it necessary

Maintaining personal hygiene

Maintaining clean premises

Being on time

### **Non-professional behaviour:**

Poor listening skills

# Students in the mid-way point in their studies: group of 4

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## ETHICS

Ethics in osteopathy takes into consideration the attitude towards the school, patients, colleagues

### **Non-ethical behaviour:**

Disrespect of the rules of the School

Undermining of colleagues

Use of other people's work for our own gain

Use of patient's information or photos without their approval

Disrespect of the rules and regulations of the profession

## PROFESSIONALISM

Is competency, qualification, respect, and a serious work ethic

### **Non-professional behaviour**

Disrespect of the patient's intimate zone

Superficial treatment of the patient

Keeping a patient that we know we cannot help

Ignoring red flags

Overstepping professional boundaries



# Student in the final year of studies: 1

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## ETHICS

Represents the individual's ability to respect ethical and moral codes , respecting the rights of the patient, their religious beliefs, spirituality and the integrity of the person.

### **Examples of ethical behaviour:**

- Respects patient's privacy
- Same treatment of all patients regardless of their gender, age, economic status, religion race or nationality
- Respecting patient's emotions

## PROFESSIONALISM

Takes into account the characteristics and attitudes of the professional that determine how this person will perform his/her professional work as well as the attitude towards their work.

### **Examples of professional behaviour:**

- Being on time
- Being neat
- Being knowledgeable
- Good communication skills
- Organizational skills

# Student in the final year of studies: 2

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## ETHICS

Ethics and morality cannot be separated from professionalism since a professional in their work follows ethical principals and in medicine that means respecting patient's rights as well as respecting the whole person

### **Examples of professional behaviour:**

- Respecting the patient'/client's privacy
- Truthfulness in your claims
- Politeness
- Protection of the profession
- Respecting colleagues

## PROFESSIONALISM

- Professionalism includes a well educated practitioner as well as awareness of one's limitations
- Showing expertise in their field
- As a professional we do not perform therapeutic acts that we do not know

### **Examples of professional behaviour:**

- Good case history taking
- Performing a competent clinical evaluation
- Respect of red flags
- Respecting professional norms
- Keeping good records
- Being on time and respecting the time allotted to the patient

# Informal results and conclusions

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- Students did indeed know about ethics and professionalism.
- Sometimes students mixed up notions of ethics with professionalism
- Awareness of ethics and professionalism increased and changed the atmosphere in the school, students started being more cooperative and helpful with each other. There was less cliquish behaviour.
- Even though some students did not initially see the importance of discussing ethics and professionalism they came to appreciate it in the end.
- It is definitely essential to teach ethics and professionalism as it may be one of the most important courses the student takes.

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Thank You for your attention

