

The Ethics Committee and the Professional Code and Conduct

- 6.1 The Ethics Committee is established by the Medical Council under the Medical Registration Ordinance and its functions include:-
- (a) to study and review any case relating to medical ethics or professional conduct, either on its own motion or at the request in writing of not less than 20 registered medical practitioners;
 - (b) to advise and make recommendations to the Council on matters about medical ethics and professional conduct generally.
- 6.2 The membership of the Ethics Committee (as at 31 December 2003) was as follows:-
- Dr David FANG, SBS, JP (Chairman)
 - Dr CHAN Chok-wan
 - Dr CHAN Yee-shing
 - Dr CHIU Shing-ping, James
 - Dr KO Wing-man, JP
 - Dr LAI Cham-fai
 - Mr LAM Kan-ming, Mark*
 - Professor LEUNG Ping-chung, SBS, OBE, JP
 - Dr LI Kwok-tung, Donald
 - Dr TAO LAI Po-wah, Julia*
 - Dr TSE Hung-hing
- *lay persons who are appointed by the Council to hold office for a term of one year.
- 6.3 The "Revised Guidelines on the Proper Prescription and Dispensing of Dangerous Drugs by Registered Medical Practitioners" (in both English and Chinese) were issued in October 2003 to all medical practitioners and professional medical organizations and institutions for their guidance.

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- 6.4 In 2003, the Ethics Committee had looked into the issues of "Prescription and labelling of dispensed medicines" and "Relationship between doctors and organizations". Some advice / guidelines in respect of these issues were drawn up and will be promulgated in the Medical Council's newsletter for the guidance of members of the profession.
- 6.5 The Medical Council recognizes that ready access to information on professional services provided by doctors is important for patients to make an informed decision in engaging such services. However, it is necessary to ensure that doctors do not supply excessive information to the extent of self-advertising or canvassing for the purpose of attracting patients. At present, the dissemination of service information to the public is governed by section 4.2.3 of the Professional Code and Conduct, and the dissemination of service information by a doctor to his patients is governed by section 4.2.4 of the Code. Against the above background, the Ethics Committee has reviewed the adequacy of the present provisions in meeting public expectation. After consultation with professional medical organizations, the Ethics Committee recommended that doctors should be permitted to, in addition to the present provisions, disseminate their service information through (i) Service Information Notices and (ii) Doctors Directories. These recommendations have been accepted by the Medical Council. Members of the profession will be informed of the new guidelines through the Council's Newsletter.
- 6.6 The Ethics Committee was reviewing paragraph 4.2.3.1 of the Code on "Signboards" with a view to providing clearer guidelines to medical practitioners in solo or group practice and a level playing field when exhibiting their signboards. The Committee will draw up some recommendations for consideration by the Council.