“Ethics is a process of dialogue that involves communication across the boundaries of philosophy, personal values, cultural assumptions and political and religious beliefs. Within it, individuals come together to generate and share new meanings, or indeed to define what it is that makes them individuals.” Paul A Komesaroff, Experiments in Love and Death, 2008:xxvi

This document has been curated by Fellows of the RACP to help you access high quality CPD resources on ethics.

Resources are categorised by type:

1. Key organisations & websites
2. Webcasts
3. Courses
4. Tools
5. Key journals
6. Recommended reading

Professional Development in Ethics

As a member of this profession, a physician must recognise responsibility to patients first and foremost, as well as to society, to other health professionals, and to self.

Important behaviours include:

- Providing an ethical role model for other staff
- Respecting the dignity and privacy of patients at all times, including confidentiality of health records
- Maintaining appropriate personal and sexual boundaries with patients at all times
- Carefully explaining examinations or treatments to the patient and seeking informed consent before carrying them out

For further information on patterns of behaviour and behaviour markers in the area of ethics please refer to the SPPP Guide.

SEND US YOUR FEEDBACK:

RACP curated collections are managed by the Learning Support Unit, based on the contributions and peer review of Fellows of the College and other experts. We thank the members of the RACP Ethics Committee for their contributions to the Ethics page. Tell us what you think about this page and make suggestions for improvement by emailing myresources@racp.edu.au.

Short on time? Try this:

- Read the AMA Code of Ethics outlining ethical principles to guide physicians
- Watch an engaging talk discussing the ethical pressures exerted on doctors
- Listen to a podcast on being more ethically conscious in daily decision making
Key organisations & websites
Useful as a starting point and overview of current work in this area

CPD TIP: Keep notes on your activities on these sites to claim CPD points in Category 6 (1 credit/hr)

**AABHL**
The Australasian Association of Bioethics and Health Law (AABHL) is an association concerned with issues of bioethics and health law. AABHL hold an annual conference and regular state-based activities as a means of furthering bioethics and health law education and debate.

**VELiM**
This University of Sydney affiliated Centre covers a wide-range of ethical issues and resources with links to blogs, twitter feeds, on-line ethics resources, and free learning materials.

**Monash Centre for Human Bioethics**
The Centre pursues research into many aspects of bioethics, and has produced ground-breaking work in several areas of bioethics and ethical theory, particularly reproductive ethics, end-of-life decision-making, and the development of utilitarian and virtue-based approaches to ethics. Its website features various resources, including research updates, Ethics in the media, and publications.

**Children’s Bioethics Centre**
The Children’s Bioethics Centre has four major areas of activity: a clinical ethics service, an education program, a research program and guideline and clinical procedure development. There are information and resources available for each category provided in the CBC website.

**Ethics and Health Law News**
The aim of EHLN is to provide up-to-date information on developments in health law and ethics from Australia and around the world. EHLN tweets very frequently on current topics relevant to physicians, covering broader ethical and legal issues with a clinician’s day to day work.

**Institute of Medical Ethics (IME)**
The Institute of Medical Ethics aims to promote and support the study of medical ethics. Their website includes a Teaching and Learning section which outlines ethical and legal principles accompanied by teaching resources. The focus is on the UK but the resources remain useful.

**United Kingdom Clinical Ethics Network (UKCEN)**
UKCEN promotes the development of ethics support in clinical practice in the UK and facilitates communication between all UK clinical ethics committees. It provides UK and US resources on clinical ethics.

**The Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet**
The Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet provides resources to inform practice and policy in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health. The website hosts an Ethics section with guidelines, publications and links to organisations that support research on Health and Ethics.

**Bioethics Centre – University of Otago**
The Bioethics Centre brings together academics from a range of disciplines and professional backgrounds. It provides resources on bioethics, including publications, blogs, and news&events.

**New Zealand’s Bioethics Council**
The New Zealand’s Bioethics Council aims to enhance the understanding of the cultural, ethical and spiritual aspects of biotechnology. The website provides a wide range of resources on bioethics topics, including links to relevant institutions operating in the field, publications, and bioethics related initiatives.
Webcasts
Useful for brief overviews of topics and recent developments

CPD TIP: Keep notes on the activities you watch to claim CPD points in Category 6 (1 credit/hr)

**Katie Watson: Medical Ethics and the Dark Side of Laughter**
Katie Watson, a medical ethicist and attorney, draws from psychology, philosophy, theatre, literature and law to consider backstage storytelling and the ethics of humour as a coping mechanism in medicine.

**Dr Sherwin Nuland: A History of Medical Ethics**
In this talk Dr Nuland seeks to illuminate the ethical pressures exerted on today’s doctors and discusses the moral virtue that affects a physician’s ability to treat their patients.

**Medicine and Morality**
Robert Truog, a Harvard Medical School professor, explains how doctors can become more aware of the ethical decisions they make every day – including the conscious and unconscious biases that shape the words they use and the way they frame conversations with patients and families.

**Stories about Medical Ethics**
This program in "narrative medicine" includes lectures on medical ethics and guest lectures by writers. The webcasts are well-produced, engaging and cover a wide-range of ethical issues.

COURSES
Useful for in depth, structured learning

CPD TIP: Keep certificates and notes from courses to claim CPD points in Category 4 (3 credits/hr)

**Centre for Values, Ethics and the Law in Medicine (VELiM) Postgraduate Bioethics Courses**
The Centre for Values, Ethics and the Law in Medicine (VELiM) at the University of Sydney provides the most comprehensive and interdisciplinary postgraduate Bioethics program in Australia. The courses offer flexibility to allow students to study while balancing their clinical and research commitments.

**Medical Ethics**
This course has been designed to provide medical health practitioners with an extended and intensive opportunity to review and update their approach to the analysis of key “medico-moral” issues.

**Monash Centre for Human Bioethics Master of Bioethics**
The Master of Bioethics offered by Monash Centre for Human Bioethics is a response to the fast growing concern about Ethics in Health Sciences. Students will have the opportunity to deepen their understanding of ethical issues in health care and the biological sciences.

**World Medical Association: Ethics Course**
Launched by the World Medical Association, this course provides training in understanding the role of ethics in medicine, recognising ethical issues when they arise and dealing with these issues in a systematic manner.

**Postgraduate study at the Bioethics Centre - University of Otago**
The Bioethics Centre offers a comprehensive range of postgraduate study opportunities which focuses on ethical issues arising within health care and the life sciences.

**Praxis**
Praxis is an independent not for profit entity that combines University of Sydney, Monash University and Bellberry. It aims to be a hub to facilitate and foster the sharing of knowledge on research ethics. Praxis offers a wide range of online, face to face and intensive courses in research ethics, governance and methods to researchers, research site managers and allied professions.
4 **TOOLS**
*Useful for implementing what you have learned in your daily practice*

**CPD TIP:** Keep documentation from audits to claim CPD points in **Category 5 (3 credits/hr)**

**NHMRC Clinical Ethics Capacity Building Resource Manual**
The NHMRC Clinical Ethics Capacity Building Resource Manual is aimed at institutions such as hospitals and clinics and provides information and tools to facilitate building clinical ethics capacity and managing operational issues associated with clinical ethics services. It also includes appendices with selected resources on designing a clinical ethics service and conducting case consultations.

**Bioethics Tools**
These tools are meant to help medical practitioners reason through difficult cases or provide a different perspective that may help clarify complex situations.

**Ethics Toolkit for Students**
This toolkit provides those who have just started to embark on a medical career with a general introduction to common ethical problems they may encounter, and practical ways of thinking about ethical issues.

**A Framework for Ethical Decision-Making**
A helpful guide put together by The W. Maurice Young Centre for Applied Ethics (University of British Columbia) to assess situations and assist the ethical decision-making process.

**Monash University Clinical Ethics Resource**
This on-line resource can assist clinicians in their responses to a wide range of ethical issues that arise in clinical practice and research. It comprises a series of modules on issues of life and death, organ donation, confidentiality, legal aspects, genetics and conflict of interest.

**AIATSIS Guidelines for Ethical Research in Australian Indigenous Studies**
The 2012 edition of the AIATSIS Guidelines reflects the best standards of ethical research and human rights. These include the establishment of agreements and protocols between Indigenous people and researchers.

5 **KEY JOURNALS**
*Useful for keeping up to date with research and finding out more on specific topics*

**CPD TIP:** Keep notes on what you read to claim CPD points in **Category 6 (1 credit/hr)**

**Clinical Ethics**
This journal features original peer-reviewed research papers on issues in clinical ethics, case studies with extensive commentary from experts and updates on important legal developments.

**Internal Medicine Journal**
The Internal Medicine Journal is the official journal of the Adult Medicine Division of the RACP. The journal has a vast selection of articles on ethics and related topics.

**Journal of Bioethical Inquiry**
The Journal of Bioethical Inquiry seeks to create a multidisciplinary forum where scholars and practitioners can publish their research, critical reflections, and analyses of bioethical issues and practice. It welcomes contributions from perspectives that are less commonly published in existing journals.

**Journal of Medical Ethics**
The Journal of Medical Ethics is a leading international journal that reflects the whole field of medical ethics, seeks to promote ethical reflection and conduct in scientific research and medical practice.
**Medical Journal of Australia**
The Medical Journal of Australia is the official journal of the Australian Medical Association. It includes a series on Ethics and Law.

**RECOMMENDED READING**
*Useful for keeping up to date with research and finding out more on specific topics*

**CPD TIP:** Keep notes on what you read to claim CPD points in Category 6 (1 credit/hr)

**RACP Guidelines for ethical relationships between physicians and industry**
The guidelines are a practical resource for clinicians, researchers, educators and managers about how to understand and manage their interactions with industry.

**CMA Code of Ethics**
This Code has been prepared by the Canadian Medical Association as an ethical guide for Canadian physicians, including residents, and medical students. Its focus is the core activities of medicine.

**Medical Ethics Today: The BMA’s Handbook of Ethics and Law, 3rd Edition**
The source for authoritative and comprehensive guidance from the British Medical Association (BMA) Medical Ethics Department covering both routine and highly contentious medico-legal issues faced by health care professionals.

**Standards and ethics guidance for doctors**
A guide published by an independent organisation in United Kingdom that helps to protect patients and improve medical education and practice.

**WMA Declaration of Helsinki**
The World Medical Association (WMA) has developed the Declaration of Helsinki as a statement of ethical principles for medical research involving human subjects.

**Breen K., Cordner S., Thomson C., Plueckhahn V. Good Medical Practice: Professionalism, Ethics and Law. Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, 2010**
The book is a useful guide for issues that arise in medical practice. It is an accessible text that reinforces a contemporary focus on professionalism, bringing together information that is central to the professional, ethical and legal requirements of being a doctor.

**Hebert, P.C. Doing Right: A practical guide to Ethics for medical trainees and physicians. Oxford University Press, Toronto, 2009**
This is a concise and practical guide to ethical decision-making in medicine. The many topics covered include truth telling, refusal of treatment, assisted suicide, managing error, and reproductive choice.

**Kerridge I., Lowe M., Stewart C. Ethics and Law for the Health Professions. Federation Press, Sydney, 2013**
The book focuses on issues that are relevant both to clinicians and to health-policy-makers, combining insights from philosophy, bioethics and the health social sciences, biomedical research data and case law.

**Komesaroff P. Experiments in Love and Death: Medicine, Postmodernism, Microethics and the Body. Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 2008**
The book explores the depth and complexity of the ethical issues that arise in illness and medicine. Through powerful descriptions of case studies the author shows how ethical decisions are everywhere, even in the smallest decisions and affect everyday experience of people who actually live, suffer and hope.