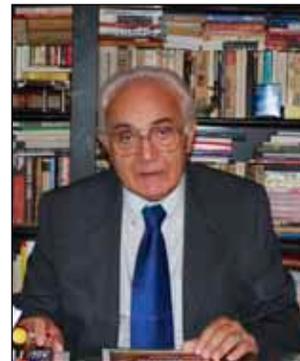


## EDITORIAL

# Medical ethics and continuous medical training

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“Grant me the strength, time and opportunity always to correct what I have acquired, always to extend its domain; for knowledge is immense and the spirit of man can extend indefinitely to enrich itself daily with new requirements. Today he can discover his errors of yesterday and tomorrow he can obtain a new light on what he thinks himself sure of today.”

Moses Maimonides – sec XII, Cordoba

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**W**e serve a profession increasingly more pressed by political, economic and financial interests imposed by a consuming society increasingly concerned about health, risks of illness and about prolonging life.

We are asked to use as quickly and as widely as possible methods and remedies with notoriety on a global scale, in conditions of increasingly severe regulations and legal requirements.

In this context, the question of the role of continuous medical training (CMT) in the ethics and medical deontology domains rightly arises.

From Aristotle and Hippocrates until our time, it has been proved that the philosophy of the medical profession is based on so real and solid principles that they were able to face, without being altered, all the evolution stages of human society.

The philosophical foundation of ethics and medical deontology remains constant in terms of attitude and thinking. If medical ethics represents the philosophical thinking of medicine and requires professional behaviour accepted by all of us by oath, deontology is a characteristic inherent in each of us. Deontological behaviour is the essence of human relationship between patient and physician.

It seems that, in this domain, society requires from us, the doctors, more than we can currently offer.

In the field of ethical training of doctors, the con-

tinuous medical training process should cultivate and emphasize four aspects:

- **Ethics of the desire to know and to understand** – it is the philosophy of **competence**. This is achieved by learning and complying with the new specialty performances and the continuing desire to keep up with them.
- **Ethics of reasoning and decision**. Any medical decision must be preceded by clear, logical and precise reasoning, based on competence and evidence. When there is doubt, insecurity or uncertainty, it is recommended to resort to consultation (a second opinion).
- **Ethics of the medical technical gesture**. Technical gesture is actually the extension of the specialist’s reasoning and competence. It must have a beneficial ending for the patient. The accuracy of the therapeutic gesture should not be expected just from the increasingly perfected and sophisticated medical equipment and instruments. Only the human brain can direct them so that the risks and undesirable effects of the technical gesture are null or as little as possible. The medical technical gesture actually represents medical responsibility, essential criterion of the doctor’s quality and value, criterion by which we are judged by the patient, society or justice.

- **Ethics of the conduct** – involves primarily the humanistic vocation accompanied by the intellectual, emotional and spiritual resources, innate and inherent in each and every one. These qualities are educated, developed and perfected with the help of models, examples and the quality of CMT.

In order to cultivate these qualities that actually confer sacredness upon the medical act, the process of

CMT must also include forays into philosophy and psycho-sociology, sciences that represent the seedbed (pattern) of medical ethics and deontology.

Deep philosophical thinking, competence, accurate reasoning and, more recently, medical evidence are fundamental elements that help us to face and overcome uncertainties, doubts, the unpredictable, which our profession has to deal with without respite.