



CONSULTATION
prior to reviewing current guidance on good professional practice

During the term of the current Medical Council, our guidance on good professional practice will be reviewed and revised. The purpose of this guidance is to ensure that the medical profession and the public have a clear understanding of the standards of practice expected from doctors.

We want to ensure that the guidance we provide is inclusive, relevant and useful. As a starting point in our review process, we would like to receive feedback from registered doctors and partner organisations about how we can improve our current publication. This is a first step in a thorough consultation process which will seek the views of the public, doctors and partner organisations. We will also invite views on our draft next edition prior to finalisation.

If you wish to view our current guidance before completing this questionnaire, please copy and paste the following link into your browser:

<http://www.medicalcouncil.ie/News-and-Publications/Publications/Professional-Conduct-Ethics/>

This survey should not take more than 10-15 minutes to complete.

We would appreciate if you could complete this survey **by close of business on 14th May 2014**.

Privacy in respect of consultation responses:

Following the end of a public consultation, we may publish a summary of responses received. Information people provide in response to our consultations may be disclosed in accordance with the Freedom of Information Acts 1997-2003. If you want the information that you provide to be treated as confidential, please tell us, but be aware that we cannot guarantee confidentiality.

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1. WHICH CATEGORY BELOW BEST DESCRIBES YOU?

- Doctor registered in the Trainee Specialist Division
- Doctor registered in the Supervised Division
- Doctor registered in the General Division
- Doctor registered in the Specialist Division
- Other healthcare professional
- Interest group / organisation for doctors or healthcare professionals
- Employer of healthcare professionals
- Indemnity Insurer
- Legal Advisor
- Involved in medical / healthcare education and/or training
- Government Department
- Healthcare Regulator
- Representing public / patient interests

2. APPROXIMATELY HOW OFTEN HAVE YOU CONSULTED THE CURRENT GUIDANCE SINCE ITS PUBLICATION IN 2009?

- Weekly
- Monthly
- Annually
- Very infrequently
- Never

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3. ARE THERE ANY AREAS WHERE THE CURRENT GUIDANCE REQUIRES FURTHER CLARIFICATION AND EXPANSION?

- Yes
- No*
- I don't know

***If you answered "No" or "I don't know" to question 3, please skip to question 6.**

4. PLEASE INDICATE WHICH SECTIONS NEED TO BE AMENDED (tick as appropriate):

Section of the 2009 Guide	Needs major amendment	Needs minor amendment	No amendment needed
Section A Professional Conduct			
Section B Responsibilities to Patients		√	
Section C Medical Records and Confidentiality		√	
Section D Consent to Medical Treatment		√	
Section E Professional Practice		√	

5. PLEASE EXPLAIN WHAT AMENDMENTS ARE NEEDED. (FOR EXAMPLE, ARE THERE ANY AREAS THAT REQUIRE CLARIFICATION/EXPANSION AND HOW? ARE THERE ANY SECTIONS OR PARAGRAPHS THAT COULD BE SHORTENED OR REMOVED?)

6. Protection and Welfare of Children – This section may need to be updated to ensure that practitioners are aware of their obligations under the Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences Against Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012 and may need to be further updated following enactment of the Children First Bill.

10. Conscientious Objection – This section may need to be strengthened to ensure that under the Protection of Life During Pregnancy Act 2013 that patients who may have a life-threatening illness are referred immediately to a physician who does not have a conscientious objection.

12. Appropriate skills and facilities – The IMO are concerned about the impact of successive budget cuts on patient safety - the guidance and the Medical Council must support doctors who have serious concerns about their ability to deliver safe care to patients with restricted resources.

18. Adverse Events – Poor communication with patients following an adverse event is a common cause for complaints against medical practitioners. This should be highlighted. Legislation is needed to protect physicians from admission of liability when apologising to patients.

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21. Abortion – As per 10 above

23. Medical Records - a supporting booklet might be useful to guide medical professionals with writing and maintaining medical records.

43. Children and Minors – a supporting booklet would be useful to support physicians with consent to treatment of mature minors.

49. Health Resources - As per 12 above the IMO are concerned about the impact of successive budget cuts on patient safety - the guidance and the Medical Council must support doctors who have serious concerns about their ability to deliver safe care to patients with restricted resources.

50. Professional Indemnity -The IMO would advise all physicians to ensure they are adequately indemnified. Newly registered doctors should be advised on registration to take out clinical indemnity insurance .

53. Clinical Trials and Research – This section should be updated to reflect the amended WMA Declaration of Helsinki - Ethical Principles for Medical Research Involving Human Subjects.

54.5 Provision of Information to the Public and Advertising –The IMO and European medical professional bodies are concerned and opposed to the development of Standards in aesthetic surgery and non-surgery services by CEN (The European Committee of Standardisation) an industrial standards body. The concerns of the medical professional bodies in Europe have been previously expressed by the IMO to the Medical Council. There is an urgent need to ensure high standards and regulation of the advertising and provision of cosmetic and plastic surgery services at National level.

56. Premises and Practice Information – This may need updating to correspond with HIQA National standards for Safer, Better, Care.

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6. DOES THE CURRENT GUIDE PROVIDE ADVICE ON ALL RELEVANT ASPECTS OF ETHICS AND PROFESSIONALISM?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

***If you answered "Yes" or "I don't know" to question 6, please skip to question 8.**

7. PLEASE EXPLAIN WHAT OTHER ASPECTS IT SHOULD COVER, OR ADVICE IT SHOULD PROVIDE.

Currently there is a two-tier health system in Ireland, many practitioners in Ireland treat both public and private patients. The IMO support the introduction of a universal healthcare system. The Guidance should highlight medical practitioners obligation to ensure that patients are treated on the basis of need and practitioners do not prioritise private patients above public patients.

There are some risks for medical practitioners in the use of social media. The IMO have developed a Guidance for Doctors on Social Media which could support the Medical Council in advising Doctors on it use. <http://www.imo.ie/policy-international-affair/documents/imo-position-papers/social-media-apr-2013/Social-Media-Position-Paper-Web.pdf>

8. DOES THE CURRENT GUIDANCE GIVE SUFFICIENT ADVICE TO DOCTORS WHO DO NOT ROUTINELY SEE PATIENTS?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

9. HOW COULD THE ETHICAL GUIDE BETTER ASSIST DOCTORS?

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Improvements to the Ethical Guide should address areas where the majority of complaints are made against physicians such as communication with patients or maintenance or patient records. However it is necessary to provide legal clarity in some areas through the Health Information Bill

10. HOW COULD THE ETHICAL GUIDE BETTER ASSIST PATIENTS?

Particularly in an era of reduced resources. The Guide must ensure that patients expectations are realistic.

11. DO YOU THINK THE CURRENT LANGUAGE STYLE IS (tick as appropriate):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Accessible					
Appropriate					

12. PLEASE RANK THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF SUPPORTING MATERIAL TO ENHANCE THE GUIDANCE, IN ORDER OF PREFERENCE, 1 BEING THE HIGHEST PREFERENCE AND 7 BEING THE LOWEST PREFERENCE.

4	Links to relevant legislation
7	Complaints outlined in vignettes
6	Short explanatory videos
3	Examples of how to apply the guidance in practice provided on the website
1	Supporting booklet for complex issues

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2	More detailed explanation provided on the website
5	Links to relevant websites

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THANK YOU!

NOW YOU'VE COMPLETED THE FORM...

Thank you for taking the time to fill out our survey. We rely on your feedback to help us improve our services. Your input is greatly appreciated.

All comments received will be collated and reviewed by the Medical Council to help decide how to improve the current guidance. We will not be providing individual feedback at this time.

Further consultation will take place once the new guidance has been drafted.

Please email this document to guide@mcirl.ie or mail it to us at:

**Review of Ethical Guide
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