

PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON GOOD MEDICAL PRACTICE

3/08/2018

A submission regarding Professionalism

As a patient of many medical professionals I demand that any link between my doctor's personal life, ideas and beliefs is kept totally separate from any regulations on his or her professional life.

In particular, I refer to the tenet of the proposed clause added to the 2014 code now as clause 2.1 in "Professional values and qualities of doctors" of the proposed code of conduct for doctors in Australia distributed for public comment in June 2018.

This clause is "The boundary between a doctor's personal and public profile can be blurred. As a doctor, you need to acknowledge and consider the effect of your comments and actions outside work, including online, on your professional standing and on the reputation of the profession. If making public comment, you should acknowledge the profession's generally accepted views and indicate when your personal opinion differs"

I demand this separation on the grounds that any attempt to ensure that their basic human traits of personal ideas, beliefs and speech is governed by their means of income or criminal record through regulation:

1. can mean that they may hide them from me and give me a false understanding of their professional motives and thus an unsound foundation for a professional relationship with them. For example, a young practicing doctor is studying eastern medicine to further her patient care and service to our diverse community. This Dr. also intimates an aim of trying to unlearn some western practices. Under the above clause, even this statement could be classified as unprofessional and be hidden because of fear of loss of livelihood, yet is vital information for a patient making a decision whether to engage the service or not.
2. will diminish their natural (especially youthful) compassionate drive to use their individual intelligence for the good of mankind creatively. Again I quote the young doctor above and the historical example of Dr. Ignaz Semelweis revealed in an article by Amanda Devine in the Sunday Telegraph 29/07/2018
3. will eventually turn the profession into a homogeneous group with enormous political power, plenty of lies and deceptions and no new ideas as was the case for Dr. Semelweis and his (now basic) handwashing hypothesis.
4. Will cause further frustration to doctors as they try to decipher how and what can be said in private, public and professional situations with threat of their livelihood being tied to their decisions.

The added clause could very easily damage the reputation of the profession through:

- a) the lack of definition of the "blurred" boundary between the doctors personal and public profile

- b) the lack of control placed on the definition of the “professions generally accepted views” (professionally, privately and publicly)
- c) the huge doorway left open for further expanding all definitions of the “professions generally accepted views” especially under the so called “blurred” public and personal profile of each individual doctor

For the above reasons as a user of the medical system I demand that the section regarding **‘Professional values and qualities of doctors’** in the new code remain completely the same as the 2014 code.