

**From:** Damon Sokolowski  
**To:** [medboardconsultation](#)  
**Subject:** Public consultation on Good medical practice  
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Dear Medical Board of Australia,

Thank you for this public consultation on proposed revisions to the Code of Conduct.

The proposed revisions are worrying, as they remove the rights of doctors, restricting both independent clinical decision-making and freedom of conscience for doctors. They propose that doctors cannot have a say about what is medically relevant or "medically irrelevant" in medical consultations. The proposal claims that gender ideology and sexual orientation, as well as other patient characteristics (point 3.4 in the draft proposal) are "medically irrelevant" in "decisions about access to medical care", which may not be the case. The proposals claim that only the patient and/or the patient's family can determine whether medical care is "culturally safe", such that patients or families could preclude doctors from determining what is medically relevant to their care, on the grounds that they do not consider the care "culturally safe" (points 2.1 and 4.8 in the draft proposal). This would be dangerous to good medical practice. For example, a patient and/or a patient's family could demand a sex change operation, or other medical procedures or treatments on the basis of cultural preferences, regardless of medical risk. It would be dangerous to good medical practice if discussion about consent (for medical treatment and procedures) were to exclude what the doctor considers medically relevant. This would belie the term "good medical practice" and obstruct the medical professional's freedom to exercise clinical judgment. The doctor could also be blamed unfairly if there were any subsequent problems after a procedure, in which a patient could claim they were not given informed consent.

Having enjoyed the care of a family GP since I was born, and the services of many other doctors, I have appreciated their frankness and perspective which, when necessary, has contradicted my perspective. I have not seen that as an impingement of my rights as a patient but a help from someone (with years of training, professional development, and experience) who cares about my well-being and helps me to understand the full implications of some medical procedures, some of which I would otherwise have been ignorant. It seems extremely unwise to restrict a doctor's freedom to exercise clinical judgement, and disregard the stringent training and countless years of research and knowledge base that they have, on the basis of what an untrained individual deems to be safe. I also am concerned for the rights of our doctors. Our doctors are not robots who must all regurgitate information that is pleasing the consumer and conform to current social/cultural fads, but are individuals with their own beliefs and should not be forced to act against their own conscience and knowledge base.

Furthermore, I believe that restricting doctors in being able to educate the patient with all the relevant facts is insulting to the patient, insinuating that patients are not resilient and intelligent enough to make informed decisions. Sadly there will be times when a patient will have to make difficult and uncomfortable decisions regarding their health, but relevant facts should not remain hidden from them due to a doctor fearing being penalized for disclosing those facts.

Yours sincerely,

Damon and Becky Sokolowski

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