

**From:** Emma West  
**To:** [medboardconsultation](#)  
**Subject:** Public Consultation on Good Medical Practice  
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To the Board,

I am deeply concerned about changes proposed to the Code of Conduct for doctors. The concept of making 'cultural safety' paramount above medical best practice - the care of the patient for the patients' best interests - is abhorrent. Presumably, if this is related to current social and political thinking, this proposal is designed to prevent doctor's differing from the patient when it comes to their gender identity, for example, or the medical process of transitioning. However, if any group have the right and the expertise to offer a different opinion on this or any biologically significant issue, it is our doctors. The medical profession understand the implications of a patient's wishes and decisions, and know better than non-medical practitioners the health risks and likely outcomes of medical or therapeutic interventions. However (for example) a person may self-identify, the biology of their body must be allowed to be treated and discussed for what it is, and a doctor must have the legal freedom of conscience to offer or refuse treatment based on their professional and ethical understanding of their patient's medical health needs, rather than be enslaved to the wishes of the patient or their family. A sensitive doctor must still be a truthful doctor, and the law ought to uphold this responsibility, not punish it.

Consider what a new law promoting 'cultural safety' above medical expertise may mean if in future, a person wishes to have their daughter undergo female circumcision! Think about what cultural beliefs and tastes have done to human health throughout history: the elongation of women's necks for beauty'; FGM; foot-binding; all manner of ignorant and violent practices have been 'culturally-appropriately' used to oppress women or mutilate the human body. Whatever the critics of Western medicine may say, it has by the advancement of knowledge and the practice of good science delivered us from so many harmful and degrading ways of treating the human body that emerged from culturally-entrenched superstitions. Doctors have an understanding of how the human body works and what will promote it's health. We must not EVER have the ignorant dictate to the informed. Patients know and can best describe the experience of their symptoms, but doctors have expert insight into the causes and the treatments that will restore their health. Doctors ought to continue to have the right to offer their insight into a patient's experience even if this differs from the views or expectations the patient might hold.

To introduce a law that would shut down the discussion and prevent a doctor offering their true opinion of the problem and it's best treatment is *unbelievably morally irresponsible* and will expose the whole society to the risk of harm to the human person. Culture is not infallible, nor is it even stable or fixed in its insights and opinions. Whereas medical science with its various disciplines continues to offer an enduring body of knowledge of the workings of the human person, both in body and mind, and ought to be

independent of a patient's prejudices. Remember, a patient always has the right to a second opinion!

Do not make a patient's feelings, their bias, or their emotionally-charged decisions, of greater importance than a doctor's knowledge. Allow a doctor to be honest with their patients, and insist on patient's choosing to get a second opinion, rather than tell the doctor they see what they ought to prescribe, or insist that they use jargon or euphemistic language to describe the organs of the body. How unprofessional and dishonest culture will make doctors! Feelings are important, secondary to truth, but having feelings hurt by facts won't harm anyone, especially if that then leads to improved health. Patients have the right to a second opinion; and doctors must have the right to offer their honest expert opinion, and the ability to obey their conscience without being punished for it.

Yours sincerely,

Emma West