



AFOMP policy number 6: code of ethics for medical physicists in AFOMP Countries

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Abstract

This policy statement, which is the sixth of a series of documents prepared by the Asia-Oceania Federation of Organizations for Medical Physics (AFOMP) Professional Development Committee, gives guidance on how medical physicists in AFOMP countries should conduct themselves in an ethical manner in their professional practice (Ng et al. in *Australas Phys Eng Sci Med* 32:175–179, 2009; Round et al. in *Australas Phys Eng Sci Med* 33:7–10, 2010; Round et al. in *Australas Phys Eng Sci Med* 34:303–307, 2011; Round et al. in *Australas Phys Eng Sci Med* 35:393–398, 2012; Round et al. in *Australas Phys Eng Sci Med* 38:217–221, 2015). It was developed after the ethics policies and codes of conducts of several medical physics societies and other professional organisations were studied. The policy was adopted at the Annual General Meeting of AFOMP held in Jaipur, India, in November 2017.

Keywords Ethics · Conduct · Research · Education · Medical physics

AFOMP code of ethics

Preamble

A medical physicist is a health professional who applies the principles of physics to medicine. He/she works with colleagues and associates in the allied professions in the clinical diagnosis and treatment of diseases. He/she is involved in research as well as in teaching other professionals in other disciplines about the applications of physics in hospitals, research institutions and the academic institutions.

As a professional, the medical physicist must conduct himself/ herself in a manner which is consistent with high ethical standards in the performance of his/her tasks and responsibilities and in dealing with his/her colleagues, partners in allied professions and patients.

The Asia-Oceania Federation of Organizations for Medical Physics through its Professional Development Committee hereby recommends the minimum ethical standards for AFOMP member countries.

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Professional conduct

Medical physicists must

- act with honesty, integrity and dedication in all aspects of their professional practice
- show respect to all individuals who they come into contact with in their professional practice including colleagues, other health professionals, medical physics trainees or students, patients and the general public and not discriminate or exploit or harass on the basis of race, religion, gender, political views
- work in a collaborative manner to develop and maintain good relationships with colleagues and other health professionals
- stay up-to-date in their knowledge and participate in continuing professional development, and also share their knowledge with colleagues and allied health professionals
- ensure that they meet all legal, regulatory or professional requirements relating to their work
- report any instances of unethical behaviour, incompetent practice, medical incidents or failure to meet regulatory requirements
- avoid conflicts of interest and disclose such conflicts should they arise
- respect confidential information
- refuse to accept or offer inappropriate gifts, kickbacks or bribes.

Clinical practice

Medical physicists must

- have the best interests of the patient as their primary concern
- work in a safe manner and protect themselves from unnecessary harm
- not work outside their areas of training, knowledge and expertise
- communicate to the patient relevant information within the medical physicist's areas of training, knowledge and expertise
- safeguard the patient's privacy
- ensure that robust quality assurance programmes are maintained.

Research

Medical physicists must

- not fabricate or falsify data and avoid plagiarism

- recognise the correct ownership of data and keep recorded data secure
- ensure authorship assignment is consistent with the input of the researchers involved
- ensure patients are fully informed about the research and its potential risks and benefits
- respect a patient's privacy and have their consent to use their data
- obtain research ethics approval from an appropriate authority
- disclose any financial support obtained from a vendor to fund their research
- adhere to the best practice in the ethics of scholarly publishing by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE).

Education and training

Medical physicists must

- maintain high standards of practice in relation to education and training, planning, monitoring, assessment and reporting.
- use core theories of learning, particularly adult learning and reflective practice, to maintain or improve knowledge, skills and attitudes.
- respect the teacher-student relationship and ensure relevant matters are communicated freely between the two without limiting a student's freedom of expression
- set learning goals and ensure that they are met and fairly evaluated
- acknowledge a student's efforts
- keep fair and accurate records of a student's progress and make the records freely accessible to the student
- ensure the content of their academic and clinical training programmes are periodically updated.

References

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