

# **CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT FOR PRACTITIONERS IN RESPIRATORY PHYSIOLOGY**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This Code of Professional Conduct is prepared as a guide for Respiratory Technicians, Physiologists and Scientists (herein, referred to as 'The Practitioner') working at all levels with patients receiving health care.

The practitioner/patient relationship requires the patient's trust in the practitioner. This trust depends upon the patient's assurance of being the prime concern during the clinical encounter, and upon the patient's confidence that the care received will be competent, whether in diagnosis, treatment or support.

## **STANDARD OF CARE AND PRACTICE**

Patients are entitled to the highest standard of practice and care at all times. The essence of the standards are professional competence, good relationships with patients and colleagues and observance of professional ethical obligations.

In providing care you must therefore:

- Achieve and continuously maintain high standards of competence.
- Recognise the limits of your professional competence. You must identify and decline to undertake any area of work which you know or believe to be outside your clinical competence.
- Be willing to consult colleagues and other service providers when additional knowledge and expertise is required.
- Be truthful, competent, and accurate, when performing and reporting respiratory physiological procedures/treatment.
- Keep accurate, legible, factual and contemporaneous records and reports in order to provide information for professional colleagues and for legal purposes as necessary (see local guidelines).
- Ensure effective and appropriate use of resources
- Keep colleagues informed.
- Conduct yourself in a professional manner appropriate to the setting.

## **MAINTENANCE OF TRUST**

To maintain and establish trust you must:

- Provide health care on the basis of clinical need
- Respect patients' privacy, dignity, religion and cultural beliefs.
- Listen to patients and respect their views.
- Treat patients considerately and politely.
- Give clear information to patients in an appropriate form
- Respect the right of patients to refuse treatment or to take part in teaching or research, reporting the refusal to the person requesting the procedure.
- Respect the right of patients to be fully involved in all decisions about their care.

- Ensure that your views about a patient's life style, culture, beliefs, race, colour, sex, sexuality, age, social status or perceived economic worth, do not prejudice the service you give.
- Respond to complaints promptly and constructively.
- Patients have a right to expect that you will keep personal information obtained in the course of your professional duties in the strictest of confidence unless they agree otherwise.
- Provide services to all patients in an equitable manner.

### **ABUSE OF PROFESSIONAL POSITION**

You must not abuse your patients' trust.

It would be inappropriate to:-

- improperly disclose or misuse confidential information about a patient to a third party.
- use your position to establish improper personal relationships with patients or their close relatives.
- influence your patient to give money or other benefits to you or other people.

### **PROTECTION OF PATIENTS**

You have a duty to protect patients if you believe that a colleague's conduct, performance or health presents a threat to them.

The safety of patients is the primary concern at all times. You should do your best to establish the facts before taking action. Then, if necessary, you must tell someone from the employing authority or from a regulatory body. Under no circumstances must any Practitioner who witnesses malpractice, whether by a colleague or other professional remain silent about it. Your comments about colleagues must be honest and factual. If you are unsure what to do, ask an experienced colleague.

### **YOUR HEALTH AS A RISK TO PATIENTS**

If you have or are carrying a serious communicable condition, or if your judgement or performance could be significantly affected by a condition or illness, you must take and follow advice from a consultant in Occupational Health, or another suitably qualified person on whether and in what ways you should modify your practice.

Do not rely on your own assessment of the risk to patients. It is your responsibility to seek further advice from your Occupational Health Department.

If you think you have or are carrying a serious communicable condition you must have all the necessary tests. You must then act on the advice given to you by a qualified medical practitioner about necessary treatment and/or modification to the clinical service you are committed to give.

### **MAINTAINING UP TO DATE KNOWLEDGE**

You are responsible for maintaining and developing your personal and professional competence throughout your career. You should take part regularly in educational activities which relate to the clinical application of respiratory science and technology.

The ARTP recommends that all members attend

- at least **one** National professional meeting
- at least **two** local/in house training meetings per year

You should be aware of current legal issues which affect your practice.

You must work with colleagues to assess and improve the quality of the service which is provided.

## **TEACHING & TRAINING**

The ARTP encourages you to contribute to the education and training of colleagues.

All competent practitioners should be prepared to supervise and support less experienced colleagues.

If you have special responsibilities for teaching you should develop the skills of a competent teacher. If you are responsible for training junior colleagues you must ensure they are adequately supervised.

## **WORKING WITH COLLEAGUES**

You must not give grounds for a patient or relative to doubt a colleague's knowledge, competence or skills through any comments you may make.

You will undoubtedly be working in a multi-disciplinary team. You are expected to work constructively within such teams and to acknowledge the skill and contribution of colleagues.

You must ensure that any information you possess or acquire that has a bearing on the clinical management of a patient is communicated promptly and fully to those individuals who need to know. This may include clear documentation in patient notes and folders.

If you are leading a team, you must always make sure that the whole team understands the need to provide a polite and effective service, and to treat patient information as confidential.

## **HOSPITALITY AND GIFTS**

You may accept only limited personal travel grants and hospitality from companies for educational conferences or meetings. The amount you receive must not be more than you would normally spend if you were paying to attend.

Written notification of commercial sponsorship must be made in advance to your director or designated officer.

You must not ask for or accept fees for agreeing to meet sales representatives.

You may accept an honorarium for presenting/talking about professional issues provided it is in an educational forum (ie not promotional).

You should not ask for, or accept from companies, any rewards, except those of insignificant value.

## **RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT**

Members of the profession shall promote understanding of respiratory technology and physiology to the widest possible audience.

If you are taking part in clinical trials, or any other form of patient based research, you must make sure that the research is not contrary to the patient's interests. Ensure that the research protocol has been approved by a properly constituted research ethics committee.

You must adhere to all aspects of the research protocol. Your conduct in the research must not be influenced by payments or gifts.

You must always record your research results truthfully and maintain adequate records. In publishing the results you must not make unjustified claims for authorship.

**You must always be prepared to explain and justify your actions and decisions.**

The compilation, revision and updating of the code is the delegated responsibility of the Executive Committee.

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