



Code of Ethics of the American Academy of Ophthalmology

Pertinent Principles and Rules of the Code of Ethics related to
Research and Innovation

Preamble

The Code of Ethics of the American Academy of Ophthalmology applies to the American Academy of Ophthalmology and to its Fellows and Members in any class of membership, and is enforceable by the American Academy of Ophthalmology.

A. Principles Of Ethics

The Principles of Ethics form the first part of this Code of Ethics. They are aspirational and inspirational model standards of exemplary professional conduct for all Fellows or Members of the Academy in any class of membership. They serve as goals for which Academy Fellows and Members should constantly strive. The Principles of Ethics are not enforceable.

1. Ethics in Ophthalmology. Ethics address conduct and relate to what behavior is appropriate or inappropriate, as reasonably determined by the entity setting the ethical standards. An issue of ethics in ophthalmology is resolved by the determination that the best interests of patients are served.

2. Providing Ophthalmological Services. Ophthalmological services must be provided with compassion, respect for human dignity, honesty and integrity.

7. An Ophthalmologist's Responsibility. It is the responsibility of an ophthalmologist to act in the best interest of the patient.

8. Professional Integrity in Research. It is the responsibility of the ophthalmologist to maintain integrity in clinical and basic research. Professional relations with industry regarding research should advance the best interests of patients and the profession.

B. Rules of Ethics

The Rules of Ethics form the second part of this Code of Ethics. They are mandatory and descriptive standards of minimally-acceptable professional conduct for all Fellows or Members of the Academy in any class of membership. The Rules of Ethics are enforceable.

2. Informed Consent. The performance of medical or surgical procedures shall be preceded by appropriate informed consent.

3. Research and Innovation. Research and innovation shall be approved by appropriate review mechanisms to protect patients from being subjected to or potentially affected by inappropriate, ill-considered, or fraudulent basic science or patient-oriented research. Basic science and clinical research are conducted to develop adequate information on which to base prognostic or therapeutic decisions or to determine etiology or pathogenesis, in circumstances in which insufficient information exists. Appropriate informed consent for research and innovative procedures must recognize their special nature and ramifications. In emerging areas of ophthalmic treatment where recognized guidelines do not exist, the ophthalmologist should exercise careful judgment and take appropriate precautions to safeguard patient welfare.

11. Commercial Relationships. An ophthalmologist's clinical judgment and practice must not be affected by economic interest in, commitment to, or benefit from professionally-related commercial enterprises.

12. Communications to Colleagues. Communications to colleagues must be accurate and truthful.

15. Conflict of Interest. A conflict of interest exists when professional judgment concerning the well-being of the patient has a reasonable chance of being influenced by other interests of the provider. Disclosure of a conflict of interest is required in communications to patients, the public, and colleagues.

17. Confidentiality. An ophthalmologist shall respect the confidential physician-patient relationship and safeguard confidential information consistent with the law.

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