

**BIOETHICS**  
**FOR FOREIGN STUDENTS**

## INTRODUCTION.

Among disciplines, regulating activity of doctor, ethics occupies one of the important places. The special study of ethics is necessary, because moral problems are very complex and correlation of moral and other regulators of medical activity is not simple too. We will study bioethics, that is the science about moral behavior with regard to professionally significant values for doctor. These significant values are life and health.

One should remark, that bioethics is applied philosophy. One ought to remember also, that bioethics is the subfield of ethics and we will begin from the study of ethics.

## MAIN TENDENCIES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF ETHICS

**Ethics**, the philosophical study of morality. The word is also commonly used interchangeably with “morality” to mean the subject matter of this study; and sometimes it is used more narrowly to mean the moral principles of a particular tradition, group or individual. The origin of the word “ethics” is the Greek word “ethos”. Interesting to remark that originally the meaning of the word “ethos” was combined dwelling and rules generated by combined social life, norms which rally society, overcoming individualism and aggression.

Ethics is the important part of ancient religious knowledge. There are premises of the forming of modern ideas about morality in religious studies. So-called golden rule of morality was formulated by Confucius (Chinese thinker usually as founder of Confucian school of thought, sixth-fifth century b.c.): **Do not do the things which you do not want to be done to you.** Other formulation of this rule one can find in Christianity: **Just as you want others to do for you, do the same for them** (Holy Bible, Luke 6: 31).

**Deontology (ethics of duty)** is the development of ancient ethics. It was substantiated by Kant (great German philosopher, 1724- 1804). Ethics of duty demands to act always such way so that human action could become moral model for everybody. Ethics of duty in Kant version forbids to consider and use other people as means for the achievement of own goals.

**Humanism** is set of presuppositions that assigns to human beings a special position in the scheme of things. Human (his life, freedom, development) is considered as a highest value.

**Hedonism**, the view that pleasure (including the absence of pain) is the sole intrinsic good in life.

**Utilitarianism** is the ethical study which considers utility or profit as criterion of morality. Its best-known proponent British philosopher J.S. Mill (1806-1873) formulated principle of utility: always act so as to produce the greatest happiness.

**Medical ethics** is the system of moral principles that apply values and judgments to the practice of medicine. Western medical ethics may be traced to

guidelines on the duty of physicians in antiquity, such as Hippocratic Oath (author is Hippocrates (fifth century b.c.) Greek physician).

The quintessence of Oath: “I will prescribe regimens for the good of my patients according to my ability and my judgment and never do harm to anyone. I will give no deadly medicine to any one if asked, nor suggest any such counsel; and similarly I will not give a woman a pessary to cause abortion. In every house where I come I will enter only for the good of my patients, keeping myself far from all intentional ill-doing and all seduction. All that may come to my knowledge in the exercise of my profession or in daily commerce with men, which ought not to be spread abroad, I will keep secret and will never reveal”

### PLAN OF SEMINAR

1. Ethics and its origin.
2. Ancient ethics and deontology.
3. Humanism, hedonism and utilitarianism.
4. Medical ethics.

### **Control questions**

1. What is your attitude to the golden rule of morality?
2. Are you agree with humanism?
3. Is there connection of deontology and medical ethics?

## THEME № 1

### PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF ETHICS AND BIOETHICS.

Ethics is the philosophical study of morality. The root of the word “morality” is “moral”. And it is ethics which gives us all necessary knowledge about moral and exactly explains what it means.

Moral is the most ancient regulator of human behavior in the society. Its existence is caused by the system of publicly accepted values without which people can't live. When human is born and grows, he (she) finds himself (herself) in a fully developed system of values which is verified and approved by the society.

Anything can be value. There are different kinds of value. For example: food, accommodation, money, life, freedom, beauty. They form system of values, which is generally significant. And at the same time every person with his (her) own destiny, with his (her) own emotional and psychological structure is unique because human doesn't only adapt the accepted system of values to own life but is also guided by individual values which belong only to him (her)self.

Morality regulates both the attitude of every individual towards generally accepted values and the correlation of his (her) individual system of values with the generally accepted one.

In contradistinction to other regulators of human behavior (law, politics, economy) morality is distinguished in two aspects:

- 1) its instructions are not official (that is fixed by law); 2) its sanctions are informal ( that is violation of moral norms doesn't lead to legal responsibility).

Meanwhile, people are usually guided by moral instructions than by legal standards and are more afraid of silent condemnation of other people than of the sanctions of legal character.

Morality is the first historic regulator of human behavior (taboo, prohibition of incest).

According to one of the theories morality has biological nature: the necessity of securing certain biological conditions of human survival in understandable forms which belong only to human, gave birth to the system of moral regulators.

According to the other theory morality has exclusively social nature: human doesn't possess any instincts which regulate the behavior of animals, but in the process of collective activities human developed the standards of cooperation which are based on the intelligence.

One can mention the third theory. It is divine theory. Here God gave people moral principles.

Morality has never been unchangeable throughout the whole history of mankind. Its norms to a large extent have always depended on concrete social-

economic situation in the society. Morality has always defended the things which helped the human civilization to survive and to develop itself.

Every person has got three interrelated systems of moral values: the values of the society where human lives, the values of the social group to which human belongs and the values which are connected with human personal experience and with human destiny.

## PLAN OF SEMINAR

1. Ethics as the philosophical study of morality.
2. Characteristic of morality.
3. Nature of morality.
4. Philosophy and bioethics.

## Control questions

1. Which values are the most important for you?
2. Were there any situations in your life when moral motives like punishment or encouragement were stronger than any others?
3. Can you say that in your choice of the profession moral values of medicine also had some meaning ?

## **THEME №2.**

### **A HUMAN IN THE SYSTEM OF MORAL RELATIONS**

Moral is a well-balanced system which consists of three parts: moral actions, moral relationships and moral consciousness.

The first criteria, according to which one can judge of the morality of actions is the motive or reason of action. Motive is an incentive to the activities which is connected with the desire to satisfy certain needs. Every human action contains some aim. Aim characterizes the ideal anticipation of the result of the activities and also the means and the ways of its realization. The moral aspect of different aims is expressed in the impact of the result of such activities on other people. Every aim implies for its realization the application of certain means. One of the principal questions is the correlation of aims and means. Any moral action is considered to be good only when the motive, the aim and the means are good and noble. This rule can be regarded as the moral ideal to which one should strive for.

When one gets a reply to action then it is possible to speak about moral relations which people experience while interacting with each other. The whole spectrum of human relations contains moral information. At the interpersonal level such moral relations as friendship, love, hatred, faithfulness, mutual understanding are the most typical ones. Moral relations between the doctor and the patient are kind of interpersonal relations.

The whole totality of moral actions and attitudes is regulated and reflected by moral consciousness. The basis of human moral consciousness constitutes the idea of good, evil and duty. The dialectics of good, evil and duty to the fullest extent is expressed in the so-called “golden rule of morality”.

The result of the developed moral consciousness is the set of moral principles. They are the most common directives by which people are guided throughout all their lives. One should bear in mind that the formation of moral principles is connected with the objective necessity of mutual actions.

The most common guiding line is an ideal. The ideal is really unachievable otherwise it won't be the ideal. And if there were not ideal in one's life such life would be useless.

The main structural elements of moral consciousness in which functions of morality are evidently realized constitute the norms and evaluations. Moral norms originate only as a result of the continuous experience of people's common life in the society. And everything without which the society could fall apart is fixed in such norms. First of all, one can refer to this category the norms of behavior in the group, the relations of parents and children, attitude towards labor, towards property. Practically all human actions are strictly regulated by the generally accepted norms.

The way one carries out the norms is fixed in the evaluation of human behavior. The evaluation in moral is of informal character. The evaluation is the correlation of real actions with the norms, moral qualities, moral principles and at last with the ideal. The evaluations are the directives of further moral actions. The structure, character and content of evaluations have always been connected with the certain system of values adopted by human.

### PLAN OF SEMINAR

1. Moral actions and their components.
2. Moral relationships.
3. Moral consciousness and its structural elements.

### **Control questions**

1. What moral qualities from your point of view must a doctor have?
2. What moral difficulties can take place in the activities of medical group of workers taking into account its complex structure (doctors, administrators, nurses and so on) ?
3. Have you ever experienced the action of moral sanctions?

## **THEME №3**

### **LIFE AS VALUE**

There is the invariant of higher values which is meaningful to all people. These are the values connected with the existence of a human as a living species. The main one among these values is life. Human realizes the value of life only through the notion of death. The death is quite opposite to the life according to the scale “good-evil”, because people die much earlier than they exhaust their biological resources. Naturally, people regard death as evil. But then comes the conclusion that the moral ideal in this case is immortality. Actually the immortality can't be considered the moral ideal because it negates the value of life of species. The biological species exists only because separate individuals die. But for modern human to die is dreadful. When close relatives or friends die it is even more dreadful. Religion tries to find the moral way out of this situation. In religious ethics there is a postulate about the life on the Earth as the preparatory period for the eternal life, for the life of one's soul. One can easily see the psychological ground of this theory- to reconcile a human to the necessity for the idea of the inevitable death, to console him. And the very notion of death changes in this context, it appears to apply only to the body but not to the spiritual essence of human. At the same time in religious morality there is a whole system of principles which specifically single out value of “the life of the body”, if it is possible to say so. According to these principles the murder as well as the suicide is the sin.

But whichever aspect we consider in connection of the problem of value of life, of life and death, we always find ourselves in the field of the principles of bioethics. That's because bioethics is a science about moral behavior concerning only one value- that's life.

Bioethics is the young science. The term “bioethics” was proposed by oncologist Van Potter in 1969 in his book “Bioethics: the bridge in future”. It originated at the time when negative consequences of the global anthropogenetic influence of human onto the nature is obvious. This moment can be considered the beginning of the synthesis of different theories, concepts and rules concerning the norms which regulate the attitude towards life into the single science. However, bioethics hasn't become the single one so far.

The central value of bioethics is life in general (with the admission of its absolute value). The subject of morality in bioethics is every human. Bioethics includes ecological norms as the obligatory ones.



## PLAN OF SEMINAR

1. The explanation of life.
2. Life and death.
3. "Life" in bioethics.

### **Control questions**

1. Try to give your own definition of life.
2. Try to remember the situations when you especially realized the value of life and when you experienced the fear of death. Was it simultaneously or separately in different cases?
3. Why is bioethics considered to be a science not about the value of life but rather a science about the behavior of human towards life as value?

## THEME №4

### BIOETHICS: POSITION OF A DOCTOR AND OF A PATIENT

The main problem here is mutual responsibility of a doctor and a patient for the life and health of the latter in the period of their interaction.

For medical workers the attitude of a patient towards own health is principally important for the whole process of treatment. Therefore, there are moral requirements to the position of the patient from the point of view of bioethics.

1. The responsibility in the face of the past.
2. The responsibility in the face of the future.
3. The responsibility in the face of the present.
4. The right to the worthy life.
5. The right to the health protection.
6. The right to the natural death.

Moral attitudes of a doctor and a patient can be conventionally divided into three stages which correspond to the stages of medical treatment (diagnostic, treatment, rehabilitation).

At the first stage the most important thing is the establishing of moral-psychological contact with the patient. In this aspect the doctor has to evaluate the personality of the patient in general, to find out the hierarchy of moral values which are essential for the patient, to choose the forms of behavior with the concrete patient.

One should also take into account that in practical work every doctor comes across with four conventional types of the personal reaction to one's disease: 1) subjective unhealthy feelings- "escape into one's illness; 2) apathy, indifference- "escape from one's illness; 3) negation of one's illness, ignoring it; 4) underestimation of the seriousness of one's illness.

The treatment stage is characterized by moral-psychological adaptation towards somatic disease. The attitude to the treatment can be active, passive and negative, which in its turn depends on the character of relations established between the doctor and the patient.

Rehabilitation stage distinguishes itself by the increase of the doctor's role as moral agent especially for those patients who experience the problem of somatic inferiority.

Taking into account the positions of a doctor and a patient one can suggest the certain models of their moral relations.

MODEL 1. Of the technical type. It is based on the idea "doctor as a scientist" which suggests his vividly expressed impartiality towards the patient.

MODEL 2. Of the sacred type. Here doctor abstracts from all scientific notions and acts rather than a priest or magician.

MODEL 3. Of the corporate type. The doctor is like a friend to the patient and they act together as colleagues in the struggle against the disease.

MODEL 4. Of the contract type. It is based on the principle of exchanging the activities when both sides start interacting and in this way realize their opportunities for the sake of their common benefit.

#### PLAN OF SEMINAR

1. Responsibility for life and health.
2. Moral position of doctor.
3. Models of moral relations.

#### **Control questions**

1. Think and answer what principles of “the ethics of a patient” are the most important ones in the conditions of insurance medicine.
2. Which of the given models describing the relations of a doctor and a patient would most of all suit you as: a) doctor, b) patient ?
3. Enumerate all moral manifestations of all the four types of reaction to one’s illness.
4. Consider the situation. There is a car accident. The ambulance with a doctor arrives to the place of the accident. There are three victims but only one doctor. Whom must he help in the first turn and why?

## **THEME №5**

### **CONTEMPRORY PROBLEMS OF BIOETHICS IN MEDICINE**

The necessity of resorting to the principles of bioethics becomes evident for the medical workers when they find no explanatory procedures within medicine for solving different problems. All such problems can be conventionally divided into three groups.

1. The problems, which are significant to all mankind. First of all it's a question of the value of life and its correlation with other values (health, prosperity, love, etc). In bioethics the problem is more often formulated in such a way: life or health? And this is very important when it refers to euthanasia and also to the old problem of abortion.

One can discuss here the problem concerning "the quality of life".

2. The problems connected with the appearance of new medical knowledge and technologies. Thus, with the appearance of new transplantation technologies of organs and tissues, a set of situation came into being. The same processes take place in modern neontology, resuscitation, gerontology. The problems of psychiatry and psychotherapy are of another nature. In the course of further computerization there arise new problems of the kind "man-machine".
3. The problems which arise during the interaction of medicine as a social institute and with other spheres of social life. So, there is a serious difference between the ethic status of state insurance and private medicine.

In each of the spheres of life there is its own ethics and medicine has its own ethics. That's why the correlation between different moral systems which come into contact and must be achieved in the frame of bioethics.

#### **PLAN OF SEMINAR**

1. General problems of bioethics.
2. New medical knowledge and technologies.
3. Medicine and other spheres of social life.

#### **Control questions**

1. Do you consider the prohibition of abortion to be morally justified?
2. Who is morally responsible for the choice of the treatment strategy if a patient himself can't express his opinion?
3. Can you explain the reasons of moral prohibition of making the experiments on human beings?

## THEME №6

### EUTHANASIA

The term was proposed by English philosopher F. Bacon. It means literally “easy death”. Euthanasia broadly is the beneficent timing or negotiation of the death of a sick person. More narrowly it is the killing of a human being on the grounds that he is better off dead. In an extended sense it is used to refer to the painless killing of animals in our interests at least as much as in theirs.

Active euthanasia is the taking of steps to end a patient’s life. Passive euthanasia is the omission or termination of means of prolonging life, on the grounds that the person is better off without them.

Voluntary euthanasia is the action with the patient’s consent or at his request. In-voluntary euthanasia is action over the patient’s objections. Non-voluntary euthanasia is the killing of a person deemed incompetent with the consent of someone.

Few moralists hold that life must be prolonged whatever the cost. Religious, traditional morality forbids directly intended euthanasia.

The most important arguments for euthanasia are the pain and indignity suffered by those with incurable diseases, the burden imposed by persons unable to take part in normal human activities and the supposed right of persons to dispose of their lives however they please.

Non-religious arguments against euthanasia include the danger of expanding the principle of euthanasia to an ever-widening range of persons and the opacity of death and its consequent incommensurability with life, so that we cannot safely judge that a person is better off dead.

According to the main principle of bioethics the principal value of life is life itself. Therefore, it should be preserved at any conditions. But doctors know better than anyone else what “the life of an organism” and “the life of a person is” and what “life as the good” and “life as the suffering is”. There is a minimum-program for a doctor: to save one’s life and there is a maximum-program – to restore one’s health. Moreover, there exists a psychological law: if a man breaks the norm even only once, he will surely do it again.

But in spite of all these objections of the religious and nonreligious character, legislations in some countries already has permitted euthanasia.

One must agree that problem of euthanasia sets very important dilemma: on one side life as the principal value, but on other side patient’s life, which is full of unbearable suffering in terminal stage.

However the way out of the problem is the development of palliative help and medicine. Palliation means “temporary relief”. That is palliative help implies use of the most strong pain-killers without restriction.

## PLAN OF SEMINAR

1. Concept and definition of euthanasia.
2. Types of euthanasia.
3. Positions pro and contra.
4. Bioethical attitude to euthanasia.
5. Palliative help and medicine.

### **Control questions**

1. What is your personal attitude to euthanasia?
2. You are doctor and you have patient in terminal stage, who suffers unbearably. There are such conditions in your work, that if you will make mortal injection, you will be free from any kind of responsibility. What is your solution?

## **THEME №7**

### **PRINCIPLES AND RULES OF BIOETHICS**

First principle- “Do not harm”. This principle implies to consider the concept “harm” in four aspects: a) harm as the result of the inactivity (non-rendering of medical aid); b) harm as the result of negligence or evil intention; c) harm as the result of unqualified or unconsidered actions; d) harm as the result of necessary actions in given situation.

Second principle- “Do good”. This principles implies active actions for the prevention of harm.

Third principle- principle of justice, which implies the accessibility of qualified medical aid for all patients, suffering from the same pathology.

Forth principle- principle of the respect of patient’s authonomy. This principle implies, that patient himself must give consent to treatment and what’s more, consent must be informed, that is doctor must propose to patient all variants of aid, which he can render with the reasons and prognosis of the results.

The rule of informed consent means voluntary agreement in the light of relevant information, especially by a patient to a medical procedure. An example would be consent to a specific medical procedure by a competent adult patient who has an adequate understanding of all the relevant treatment options and their risks.

The rule of privacy and confidentiality require that information gathered in the doctor-patient relationship must not be disclosed to third parties without patient’s consent.

### **PLAN OF SEMINAR**

1. Principles of bioethics.
2. Rules of bioethics.

### **Control questions**

1. What do you think about realization of the principle of justice in modern world?
2. What kind of punishment there is in your countries for doctors, who disclose information about patient?



## **THEME №8**

### **THE PROBLEM OF QUALITY OF LIFE IN BIOETHICS**

The most of specialists in bioethics define the quality of life as cognitive, social, physical and emotional functioning of human. The balance of the system of biological, mental (psychological) and social components in human represents the norm of the quality of life.

One appreciates rather not quality of life as such, but its components. The most essential among them are: contentment of the degree of own physical, psychological, social and spiritual well-being; social well-being includes such aspects as participation in social life, non-formal contacts and limitation of social possibilities because of state of health; psychological well-being implies emotional and intellectual; physical well-being depends on physical activity, power potential, character of diseases, diagnosis, objective symptoms of disease, complaints and so on.

One can distinguish four levels of the quality of life, according to one criterion. Is the ability to self-production of vital functions. The more human needs external help for their preservation the more low is the level of the quality of life.

1-level. Normal quality of life. All physiological indices are in norm. Human does not think of own health, because nothing hurts human.

2-level. Limited quality of life. It is situation, when human suffers from some defects of physical and mental health, when functional abilities do not correspond to physiological norm. But in spite of physiological problems, human is able to manage them without help.

3-level. Minimum quality of life. It is situation, when patient and observers take note of substantial physiological aggravations with the limitation of personal freedom, possibility of communication, suffering and pain. Patient needs the aid of people for the maintenance of vital functions constantly.

4- level. The quality of life is below minimum. It corresponds to the situation, when patient suffers from maximum physical weakness and full loss of sensitive and mental activity. Such patients are in the stable vegetative state. Their vital functions are supported only from outside.

### **PLAN OF SEMINAR**

1. Concept of the quality of life.
2. Research of the quality of life.
3. Levels of the quality of life.

### **Control questions**

1. What is the practical significance of the research of the quality of life?
2. How the quality of life of the mortally sick persons can be improved?

## **THEME №9**

### **BIOETHICS AS THE COURSE FOR THE HEALTHY WAY OF LIFE**

There is concept, which is important for the characteristic of this aspect of bioethics. This concept is dietetics. This term was proposed by Kant. For him dietetics is the art to prevent diseases as distinct from therapeutics, which is art to treat them.

The main rule of dietetics- spare no effort, not to weaken forces by comfort and idleness. Absence of exercising of organ is as harmful as its overstrain. The motto of antique philosophers “self-control and abstention” is fit for the characteristic of dietetics as the science about health.

The healthy way of life is the way of organization of production, living and cultural aspects of vital activity, which allows to realize human creative potential.

One can formulate the main rules, which must be put in the basis of the healthy way of life:

1. Observance of daily time-table (labour, rest and sleep) in conformity with daily biorhythm;
2. Motive activity, which includes systematic occupations of available types of sport, health-improvement race, rhythmical and static gymnastics, walking in the open;
3. Skill to remove nervous stress with the help of muscular relaxation;
4. Reasonable using of the methods of steeling in cold water;
5. Rational feeding.

#### **PLAN OF SEMINAR**

1. Concept of dietetics.
2. Healthy way of life.
3. Rules of the healthy way of life.

#### **Control questions**

1. Is it possible in modern world full realization of the healthy way of life?
2. May you realize healthy way of life?

## **THEME № 10**

### **ETHICAL COMMITTEES AND ETHICAL CONSULTING**

Existing procedures of the protection of patient's rights in bioethics imply the existence of social subjects, which realize this function.

Ethical committees of medical institutions are organized as consulting groups and drawn, when moral problems arise. Their preference is the discussion of the complex ethical problems, which take place in clinical practice and formulation of recommendations how these problems should be solved. The meaning of the existence of ethical committees and ethical consultations is the search of the solution by means of reasonable agreement. Ethical committees are formed from independent persons who are competent in the questions of bioethics and are able to evaluate medical side of affair and to give advises to not only doctors but to patients too.

#### **PLAN OF SEMINAR**

1. Ethical committees: definition and structure.
2. History of forming of ethical committees.
3. Ethical basis of the activity of ethical committees.

#### **Control questions**

1. What is the role of ethical committees?
2. Are there ethical committees in your countries?

## THEME №

### **ETHICAL PROBLEMS OF MEDICAL INTERFERENCE INTO THE REPRODUCTIVE SPHERE.**

During last 30 years auxiliary reproductive technologies help family couples, who have got problems concerning conception of child.

Methods with the help of which it is possible to solve the problems of child-birth, give a chance to have children to such couples for whom in XX century it was absolutely impossible. Such methods became particularly important because of changes which take place in modern society. Modern style of life implies that the average age of women's first pregnancy is increasing while the period of fertility is the same. Auxiliary reproductive technologies give a chance to compensate the lowering of fertility.

#### **Main ethical principles of using of auxiliary reproductive technologies:**

1. Dignity and individuality of human must be protected;
2. Any human must be sure that during the employment to him (her) methods of medicine and biology, respect of his (her) rights and freedoms will be ensured;
3. Interests and well-being of human must prevail over social and scientific;
4. Interference with the sphere of health can be realized only after human is giving voluntary and informed consent;
5. Where the talk is about destiny of embryo consent of both parents is necessary.

#### PLAN OF SEMINAR

1. The advantage of auxiliary reproductive technologies.
2. Changes of modern society and child-birth.
3. Moral problems of using ART.
4. Ethical principles of using ART.

#### **Control questions**

1. Which types of ART do you know?
2. Are there some negative consequences of using ART?