

Healthcare



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Ethical Healthcare Issues Each health Practitioner should be guided by medical principles regarding all health issues so as to meet the healthcare needs of the society successfully. They should also be in a position to think critically and be skilled in solving problems throughout their profession.

Vendor relationship is a current ethical healthcare issue that requires medical practitioners to overcome so as to meet the society healthcare needs and save lives (Wazana, 2000). It has led to conflict of interest; between pleasing pharmaceutical companies offering inducements and sticking to medical principles. According to the policy on vendor relationships, medical practitioners should base all their decisions on integrity of medical research, analysis and professional judgments. Their professionalism should not be affected by their relationship with vendors in the medical field. Such inducements have been found to influence decisions by medical practitioners.

After a thorough medical examination, healthcare practitioners, for example, doctors should be in a position to prescribe the proper medicine to a patient. According to Wazana (2000), physicians should base their decisions only on the patient's health condition and prescribe appropriate medicine whether it is from an inducing pharmaceutical company or not. This is because their role is to save patients' lives and not to promote products from pharmaceutical companies. They should not allow anyone else to affect their decisions regarding medical procedures or drug prescriptions.

Unfortunately, in some cases, it has been noted that some medical practitioner do not base their prescriptions on the patient's health needs. They prescribe medicine in favor of some pharmaceutical companies that give them inducements in the form of gifts, sponsorship in graduate

education or Continued Medical Education (CME) and food. These gifts influence the prescription patterns of the physicians even to the risk of the patient's health. This has turned their role from medical practitioners into 'sales people' for pharmaceutical companies (Wazana, 2000).

It has affected the standard of drugs, and medical devices and equipment ordered by medical practitioners for use in their medical practice hence compromising the standard of medical care offered to patients. The quality of some drug samples and therapeutic devices has not been proven by the pharmacy and therapeutics committee. This means that a lot of lives are in danger, especially patients whose medical conditions require medicine from a company that is not offering inducements (Wazana, 2000). Medical practitioners may ask such patients to use medicine that is too weak or too strong to deal with the patient's health issue as long as they are brands from the rewarding companies.

Many of the vendor relationships between medical practitioners and pharmaceutical companies have worked for the disadvantage of the society. This has caused lack of trust and confidence in physicians. It even becomes worse if the vice comes to the public domain. The vice of 'influenced prescriptions' has to be stopped. Value for human life and the society's trust on medical practitioners should be restored. Campaigns against inducements from pharmaceutical companies should be discouraged so as to end the vice and save lives. We should join hands with Stanford, Yale and Pennsylvania Universities who decided to ban sponsorships and gift offered by pharmaceutical companies. All pharmacy departments must monitor the administration of drug samples.

Reference

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Wazana, A. (2000). " Physicians and the pharmaceutical industry: Is a gift ever just a gift?" Journal of the American Medical Association (3) pp373-380.