

## Exploring Unethical Consideration in Ophthalmology; Insight Fauji Foundation Hospital Rawalpindi



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**Abstract:** *This research examines unethical issues related to ophthalmology at Fauji Foundation Hospital, emphasizing the perspectives of patients, ophthalmic physicians, and paramedical staff members. Maintaining patient trust and the integrity of healthcare delivery are dependent upon the implementation of ethical principles in medical settings. This study intends to uncover common unethical behaviors and the underlying causes of these problems in the ophthalmology department through in-depth interviews and participant observations. An extensive analysis of a number of unethical activities is part of the study, including discrimination or favoritism towards staff relatives and insufficient methods for obtaining informed permission. Interviews with patients offer insightful information about their perspectives on ethical care and their experiences, pointing out areas that want improvement. The result shows that although Fauji Foundation Hospital makes an effort to follow moral guidelines, there are important areas that need to be addressed in order to stop unethical behavior. These include developing an environment filled with accountability and ongoing ethical improvement, strengthening openness in patient care choices, and increasing training and communication on ethical standards.*

**Keywords:** Ethics, unethical issues, ophthalmology, autonomy, discrimination

### 1. Introduction:

The term "ethics" originates from the Greek word "ethos," signifying custom or character. Ethics encompasses an understanding of conflicts stemming from moral obligations and the most appropriate methods for addressing them. It revolves around the decisions we make and the subsequent actions we take. This encompasses decisions made by healthcare providers and patients, as well as the responsibilities and duties of clinicians towards their patients. Furthermore, medical ethics encompasses societal decisions, resource allocation, access to healthcare, and the ethical dilemmas they generate. Particularly in developing nations, a significant concern arises

regarding whether ethical principles are universally applicable or culturally relative, prompting discussions between Universalist and pluralist perspectives. The medical ethics primary code was published in the fifth century albeit narrative reports have followed the beginning of clinical morals to artifact. The Hippocratic Vows, preceded by early Christian lessons, have filled in as structure inside which specialists bound their training. In the middle age and early current period, the field is obligated to Islamic, Catholic, and Jewish medical ethics and moral philosophy. Transparent objectivity and to causes no harm in clinical choices seem normal to medical ethics and code of lead across the world.

Ophthalmology is the area of medicine that treats, diagnoses, and prevents diseases of the eyes. Ethics are important in the area of ophthalmology since ophthalmologists are primarily responsible for preserving eye health and vision. Unfortunately, unethical practices can exist within this profession. This research explores the unethical practices in ophthalmology, using Fauji Foundation Hospital Rawalpindi as a case study. It also examines the common examples of unethical behavior, and explores potential solutions to mitigate these issues within the hospital setting. Finally, discuss the broader implications for ophthalmic practice in Pakistan. This study is significant because it offers a thorough analysis of moral dilemmas that exceed institutional borders and are relevant to a range of healthcare settings. Nowadays, when medical advancements often outpace ethical debates, it is more crucial than ever to possess a thorough comprehension of ethical ideas.

### **Research background:**

Ophthalmology demands a very high quality of care since eye health is so fragile and breaking ethical guidelines might have serious consequences. Ethical issues arise when allocating resources and establishing priorities for treatment.

Most research focuses on the perspectives of medical professionals, often neglecting the perspectives of those affected by unethical behavior. A majority of current research on ethical problems in ophthalmology comes from developed nations. This study's objective is to fill such gaps.

### **Aims and objectives**

Aim:

1. The study tries to identify the frequent ethical problems that patients and healthcare providers face.
2. Examine the impact of such problems, and
3. Suggest methods for navigating ethics inside the organization.

Objective:

1. To examine the unethical practices that are

common in the ophthalmology sector, with an emphasis on the procedures and experiences at the Fauji Foundation Hospital in Rawalpindi, Pakistan.

## **2. Review of literature:**

Throughout history, medicine has encountered difficult situations that have challenged our ethical and moral boundaries. Hippocrates, the founder of medicine, recognized this challenge as early as the fifth century BC. His well-known Hippocratic Oath demonstrates the importance of ethics, morals, and having a strong moral compass when practicing medicine. Fundamental principles like maintaining patient security, avoiding damage, and prioritizing the interests of the patient are contained in this oath, which is still repeated by medical professionals upon graduation in many countries. Nonetheless, new developments in culture and medicine always create ethical problems.

Every interaction between a physician and a patient raises ethical concerns. A doctor has a legal responsibility to prioritize the health of their patients when conducting investigations. This might result in ethical problems such as balancing a patient's autonomy and best interests. There may be a tension between advancing a patient's health and honouring their desires when they decline life-saving treatment. These issues make it crucial for patients and doctors to have open lines for interaction and make thoughtful decisions together.

The research conducted by Alyssa M. Kretz and her team investigates the vital impact that integrity and moral education play in ophthalmology residency programmes. The purpose of the study, "Teaching Ethics and Professionalism: A National Survey of Ophthalmology Residency Programme Directors," is to provide information about the present state of moral and professional education in US ophthalmology residency programmes. To achieve this, the researchers surveyed directors of ophthalmology residency programmes across the country. The study purpose was to collect information on a range of topics related to professionalism education and ethics, such as the approaches used the duration

of classes, and the perceived success of these initiatives.

The findings of this research provided insight into a number of important areas. First, the organization and substance of ethics and professionalism instruction varied significantly between ophthalmology residency programmes, according to the researchers. Certain programmes included structured teaching sessions and curricular components, while others used random techniques or less formal training.

The survey also showed that most directors of residency programmes thought ethics and professionalism education was very essential. On the other hand, difficulties including time limits and resource shortages were frequently mentioned as obstacles to putting comprehensive educational programmes into action. The researchers also found places where ethics and professionalism education in ophthalmology residency programmes may be strengthened. These included the requirement for more faculty training, standardized curriculum, and a stronger incorporation of ethical concepts into clinical education.

Overall, the study highlights in ophthalmology residency programmes, both opportunities for improvement and important insights into the current level of professionalism and ethics teaching. Residency programmes can better prepare aspiring ophthalmologists with the ethical knowledge and abilities required to deliver superior patient care by taking these results into consideration.

### **3. Methods and methodology:**

#### **Methodology**

The study's methodology is qualitative in order to collect primary source data and in-depth information about unethical issues in ophthalmology.

#### **Methods**

##### **Qualitative methods**

In-depth Interviews: At Fauji Foundation Hospital, patients, administrators, and ophthalmologists will be the subjects of

qualitative interviews. Through semi-structured interviews with 10 patients, their viewpoints and experiences on ethical problems that arise in the practice of ophthalmology.

##### Participant's observation

In order to figure out the dynamics and outward manifestations of unethical concerns in a real-world medical context, participant observation was carried out at the ophthalmology department of Fauji Foundation Hospital for this research.

##### **Sampling**

**Healthcare Professionals:** To ensure representation from a range of hospital employment, including ophthalmologists, and administrators, a purposive sample strategy will be applied to choose participants for qualitative interviews. A group of five to six individuals will be chosen on the basis of their experience and engagement with ophthalmic treatment.

**Patients:** Fauji Foundation Hospital patients who are receiving medication or having operations done there will be chosen for in-depth interview. Participants will be chosen by convenience sampling with the goal of achieving variety in treatment circumstances, demography and diagnoses.

##### **Results and discussion:**

###### Qualitative Results:

###### In depth Interviews

Rich, in-depth insights into the ethical dilemmas in ophthalmology at Fauji Foundation Hospital were obtained via semi-structured interviews with ten patients and five medical professionals.

###### **Themes**

- 1. Informed consent**
- 2. Communication style**
- 3. Access to care**
- 4. Patients' rights and dignity**

###### **1. Informed Consent**

###### Informed about procedures

Positive experiences were shared by a number of patients, one of whom said, "My doctor took the

time to explain everything in detail, which made me feel comfortable about the surgery. "Several patients voiced their disappointment, with one complaining that "my doctor not fully informed me about procedures and treatment alternatives."

#### Informed about risk and benefits

Some patients' respond that we are fully informed about risk and benefits of treatment. But mostly patients not know about the benefit and risk of treatment. one patient said," my doctor not explain me about benefits and risk of treatment."

### **2. Communication style / behavior**

#### Doctors

Patients addressed both good and bad encounters. Some doctors behave rudely and some doctors are very cooperative and nice," stated another sufferer.

#### Staff

Here also Patients addressed both good and bad encounters. A patient commented, "Staff members behave very rudely."

### **3. Access to care**

#### Timing concern

Many patients felt that the doctors were always in a rush, impacting the quality of care

#### Financial issues

Financial issues affect some patients' access to care.

### **4. Patient's rights and dignity**

#### Discrimination

A number of patients felt discriminated against, especially those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Also felt discrimination on basis of government and private patients

#### Favoritism

Patients observed favoritism towards certain individuals.

### **Participant Observations**

The observation was conducted in the waiting area and in consultants' rooms of fauji

foundation hospital's ophthalmology department from April 30, 2024 to May 9, 2024 in different period of time. The hospital treats a diverse patient's population including people from various socioeconomic background and also private and government patients.

Observation sessions in the ophthalmology department provided additional context and validation for the findings from interviews.

Discrimination and Favoritism: Observations confirmed differential treatment based on patients' socioeconomic status and connections. Patients from affluent backgrounds received more attentive care and also those who are private patients.

Rushed Consultations: It was evident that the consultations were often rushed, doctors moving quickly from one patient to the next, leading to inadequate time for thorough examinations and patient interactions.

No proper patients name or token number recalling system due to which there is a lot of rush and noise outside the consultant rooms.

### **Discussion**

#### **Interpretation of Results**

The results show a considerable prevalence of unethical behavior, including discrimination, favoritism, and fast consultations, in the ophthalmology department of Fauji Foundation Hospital. These actions go against the beneficence, fairness, and autonomy aspects of ethics in medicine.

The information shows a notable degree of variation in the level of patient awareness on ophthalmic treatments and the advantages and disadvantages that go along with them. Although a significant number of patients express satisfaction with their care, many others believe they are not well-educated, which limits their capacity to make fully informed decisions.

According to the survey, a considerable percentage of patients feel that their doctors communicate in an unduly academic or rushed manner, even though many of them like the clarity and empathy that respective doctors provide.

### The cultural and Organizational Aspects

The behavior of medical staff is significantly influenced by the organizational culture. Unethical behavior can be lessened in a culture that supports moral behavior and appreciates it.

### Favoritism and Discrimination

Fundamental problems with healthcare delivery are reflected in the asserted discrimination

against patients from lower socioeconomic origins and favoritism towards well-connected people. These actions are against the justice principle, which calls for equality and fairness in treatment.

### Rush and Stress

There is a rush during patient consultations, due to systematic pressure and patients load, which lowers the standard of service.

**Table 1. Themes and subthemes of unethical consideration**

Sr.no	Themes	Subthemes
1.	Informed consent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fully informed about procedures</li><li>• Informed about benefits and risk</li></ul>
2.	Communication style / behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Doctors</li><li>• Staff</li></ul>
3.	Access to care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Timing concern</li><li>• Financial issues</li></ul>
4.	Patient's rights and dignity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discrimination</li><li>• favoritism</li></ul>

## **5. Recommendations:**

Training and Awareness: To overcome unconscious biases and advance the fair care given to all patients, regularly schedule training sessions that center on medical ethics and cultural competency.

Reforms in Policy: Establish and implement specific guidelines that place a high priority on moral behavior, such as procedures for managing large number of patients without sacrificing the standard of care.

Support Systems: To assist healthcare practitioners in resolving moral dilemmas, set up systems of support including ethics committees and counseling services.

Patient-First Healthcare: Encourage a patient-centered strategy that allots enough time for consultations to ensure that patients' needs are met.

## **6. Conclusion:**

The purpose of this study to explore unethical issues in ophthalmology department , in-depth interviews provide a better understanding and experience of ethical issues in ophthalmology department . The investigation exposes serious unethical practices in ophthalmology at fauji

foundation Hospital, which are caused by institutional weakness, discrimination, systemic pressures, and favoritisms. These actions weaken patients' trust, threaten the standard of care, and upset medical staff.

To solve these problems and promote an ethical culture while enhancing patient care, comprehensive approaches incorporating education, modifications to laws, and strong support networks are needed. These suggestions can help fauji foundation Hospital raise its ethical contest, which is ultimately beneficial to patients and medical professionals.

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