

Bioethics

Q. Define ethics, bioethics and medical ethics.

Ethics: Ethics is the branch of study dealing with what is the proper course of action for man. It answers the question, 'What do I do?' It is the study of right and wrong in human endeavors. At a more fundamental level, it is the method by which we categorize our values and pursue them.

Coughlin and Beauchamp defined ethics as 'The branch of philosophy that deals with distinction between right and wrong – with the moral consequence of human action'.

Bioethics: The term bioethics is derived from bios (meaning life) and ethos (meaning behavior).

Bioethics is the dealing with the ethical implications of biological research and applications especially in medicine. Bioethics includes the study of what is right or wrong in new discoveries and techniques in biology, such as genetic engineering and transplantation of organs.

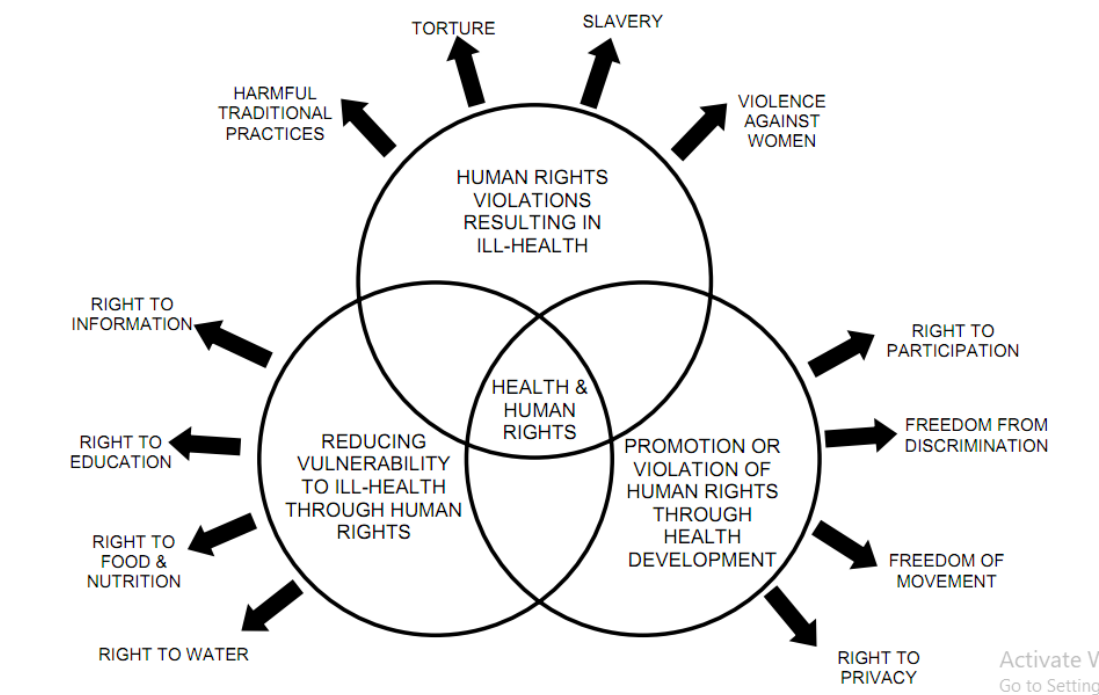
Medical ethics: Medical ethics refers to rules that health professionals are subject to in their daily practice. It involves ethical rules that apply to everyone, the scientific ethical rules and morals, which are unique for each individual.

Q. Describe the concepts of bioethics.

Concepts of bioethics: The term bioethics came from two Greek words, *bios* (meaning life) and *ethos* (meaning behavior). The term was coined in 1926 by Fritz Jahr. American oncologist Van Rensselaer Potter used the term 'Bioethics' for the first time in 1970 in an article published in the magazine in the University of Wisconsin.

Concepts:

- Bioethics is the application of ethics to the field of medicine and healthcare.
- Bioethics looks at 'what should be done' when dealing with or taking care of people and other living creatures.
- **Bioethics principles:** There are four principles which form the framework for moral reasoning:
 1. **Nonmaleficence:** One should avoid causing harm. The healthcare professional should not harm the patient. All treatment involves some harm, even if minimal, but the harm should not be disproportionate to the benefits of treatment.
 2. **Justice:** Benefits and risks should be fairly distributed. The notion that patients in similar positions should be treated in a similar manner.
 3. **Beneficence:** This principle considers the balancing of benefits of treatment against the risks and costs; the healthcare professional should act in a way that benefits the patient.
 4. **Autonomy:** Autonomy implies that the doctor is obliged not only to respect the free choice of his patient, but more importantly, to facilitate in every reasonably possible way the making of such a free choice by the patient. Autonomy is the capacity for self-determination.
- Bioethics includes both medical ethics and environmental ethics.
- **Current focus in bioethics:**
 - Branches – biomedical or clinical ethics, research ethics, organizational ethics.
 - Genetics
 - Brain imaging techniques.
 - Multiculturalism
 - Aging
 - Health care resource allocation



Q. Write down the differences between law and ethics.

Differences between law and ethics:

Law	Ethics
1. The law refers to the systemic body of rules that governs the whole society and the actions of its individual members.	1. Ethics is a branch of study dealing with what is the proper course of action for man.
2. Law is a set of rules and regulations.	2. Ethics is a set of guidelines.
3. It is governed by the Government.	3. It is governed by individual, legal and professional norms.
4. It is enforced and published in writing.	4. Ethics is abstract.
5. Violation of law is not permissible which may result in punishment like imprisonment or fine or both.	5. There is no punishment for violations of ethics.
6. Law is created with an intent to maintain social order and peace in the society and provide protection to all citizens.	6. Ethics are made to help people decide what is right or wrong and how to act.
7. Law has a legal binding.	7. Ethics do not have a binding nature.

Q. What is IRB? What do IRB review?

An **institutional review board (IRB)**, also known as an **independent ethics committee (IEC)**, **ethical review board (ERB)**, or **research ethics board (REB)** is an administrative body established to protect the rights and welfare of human research subjects recruited to participate in research activities conducted under the auspices of the institution with which it is affiliated.

IRB reviews the following items:

1. **Research design:** It includes the following information-
 - a. Are the objectives clear with sufficient background information to justify the study?
 - b. Is there a reasonable statistical plan?
 - Does it require more subjects than can reasonably be enrolled?
 - c. Are risks minimized and reasonable in relation to any potential benefit?
2. The informed consent