

PERSPECTIVES

Essay: Beyond the Hippocratic Oath-New Ethical Imperatives for Health Professionals

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The pursuit and maintenance of good health as a physiological principle contributing to qualities of life is not new in and of itself. For centuries, cultures have documented their promotion of health as a primary source of daily living and propagation of civilizations. Contemporary studies however, have acknowledged that health promotion and disease prevention are as much social and cultural commentaries as they are studies of the maladies of the physical body. To be sure, the World Health Organization (WHO) supports the definition of health as “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” (WHO, 2014). However, technological advances, 24-hour news cycles, and increased reliance of scientific progress based on previous studies require contemporary health professionals to expand ethical standards beyond “do no harm” to require compassion as a matter of professional ethics. Specific steps are listed to illustrate compassion not as a substitute for scientific process, but as a pivotal addition that ensures not only the integrity of the Scientific Corpus, but allows scientists opportunity and privilege to continue to study underserved populations.

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