Code of Deontology & Ethics of Physiotherapists in Greece

International Perspectives in Physiotherapy
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The oldest code of medical ethics: Hippocratic Oath

- Is written by Hippocrates in 4th Century BC, the father of medicine in Western culture
- One of the most widely known of Greek medical texts
- New physician swear to a number of healing gods in order to uphold specific ethical standards
- The Hippocratic oath is taken by Greek doctors while physiotherapists are taken a modified part of it during graduation day
- Some parts of the oath changed or removed in time from various schools and countries
Ethics

- The word derives from the Greek word “ethicos” which means arising from custom.

- Deals with moral issues of good and bad, based on societal norms.

- It is the code written or unwritten that guides the behavior of human beings, in different cultures and situations. This moral code may vary from society to society.

In physiotherapy can be defined as the moral code of conduct.

Defines the relationship between:

1. Therapist - Patient / Client,
2. Therapist - other Healthcare Professionals

- based on mutual respect and trust.
Deontology

- The term is derived from the Greek word δέον, deon, which means "obligation, duty" and -λογία, -logia "discourse"

**Deontological ethics** is a type of ethics and ethical theories

- Judges actions based on whether they follow certain rules
- It described as "duty" or "obligation" or "rule" - based on ethics, because rules "bind you to your duty"
Ethical principles / Laws

- **Ethical principles** are fundamental concepts by which people judge behavior. Help individuals to make decisions and serve as criteria against which people gauge the rightness or wrongness of behavior.

There are guiding ideals of conduct that speak to the spirit of a law *rather than its letter*.

- **Laws** are rules made by an authority with the power to enforce them.

Although laws flow from ethical principles, they are limited to specific situations and codified by detailed language.
World Confederation for Physical Therapy (WCPT) has published Ethical Principles and requires member organizations to have a Code of Ethics consistent with WCPT Ethical Principles.

Member organizations must also have:

1. appropriate procedures for monitoring the practice of their members
2. disciplinary procedures
3. sanctions for members whose practice falls outside their code of ethics or code of conduct
Greece has established a code of ethics for physiotherapists based on WCPT Ethical Principles. The national authority responsible for the physiotherapy profession in Greece is the Ministry of Health.

The rules of professional conduct are determined directly by the state through national legislation. The physiotherapist must be stay registered on Panhellenic association of Physiotherapy (PAP) and obtain a license to practice.

The title and the professional activity in my country called “Physiotherapist” and it is protected by the state.
Status of profession

Physiotherapy in Greece

✓ EDUCATION

✓ PROFESSION
Code of Deontology in Greece

Ethical Principles

1. General duties of Physiotherapists
2. Obligations to the patients
3. Duties to colleagues
4. Relations between the physiotherapist and other health professionals
5. Cooperation between the physiotherapist and the health authorities (Ministry of Health - Hospitals - Insurance organizations)
6. Advertisement
7. Physiotherapeutic Fee
1. **General duties of Physiotherapists**

*(Articles 1-3)*

- **Be** honest model and blameless person in all aspects of life, protecting the dignity of the physiotherapist profession.

- Respect the health authorities, the collective bodies of the sector and vice versa.

- Do anything that requires his duty according to:
  - modern scientific evidence
  - moral principles and ethics
  - the provisions of this Code,
  - the provisions of the current Statutes of the PAP,
  - all the provisions that form the legal framework for the practise of the physiotherapist profession.
General duties of Physiotherapists

- Meet the human needs as biopsychosocial and spiritual entity with the sole interest of the patient
  
  Eg. the prevention, diagnosis, treatment, rehabilitation and pain relief

  Using the scientific and professional knowledge, skills and experience, maintaining his autonomy.

- Prevent any illegal practice of physiotherapeutic profession

- Inform the responsible authorities and PAP whenever he realizes an event of usurpation of the profession

- Is prohibited to non physiotherapist to apply the profession as well as cooperation and or disguise with such people
2. Obligations to the patients

(Articles 4-12)

The PT must:

- Show absolute respect to personality, dignity and honor of the patient
- Respect personal freedom and the free will of the patient
- NOT commit any improper therapeutic experimentation - intervention, which can affect personal freedom and the free will of the patient or to endanger human life
- Give to all patients the same care, diligence and dedication, independently of:
  - Personal feelings
  - Religious - ideological perceptions
  - Socioeconomic status
  - Disease severity
- The frequency of physiotherapy sessions must be based on the seriousness of the disease, the will of the patient or his relatives
Obligations to the patients

- NOT interfere in family affairs of the patient
- Respect the privacy of patients and confidentiality with regard such information in the performance of the profession
- Prohibited any public discussion about patient’s health
- The book of patients (customers) are confidential unless the exceptions provided by law
Obligations to the patients

- NOT allowing to possess the means and possibilities of science to satisfy unfair interests or other appetites or passions
- Be informed and improve skills in the context of continuing education with the sole interest of the patient
- Prohibited to provide his patients medical advice, but must refer them to the appropriate physician
- Refuse his services whenever he considers that has limited knowledge or experience
3. **Duties to colleagues**

(Articles 13-17)

- Maintain excellent relations of mutual respect and appreciation to his colleagues, avoiding any fraudulent activity

- Prohibited:
  - to criticize or disapproves his colleagues and to report to the PAP any harmful behavior towards the patient
  - to take into consideration the badmouth and criticism to colleagues or against himself, which are not valid

- Resolving of professional disagreements must be done with conciliation or recourse for a solution by PAP without any publicity about the professional and scientific conflict
Duties to colleagues

- Prohibited to provide house-visits outside the boundaries of the area that is registered, if there is a colleague there

- Maintain a single private practice of Physiotherapy and only if it is registered in the PAP

- Prohibited the execution of another health profession simultaneously (a doctor, pharmacist, etc.)
4. Relations between the physiotherapist and other health professionals

(Articles 18-19)

- PT as an equal member of the therapeutic team should have excellent relations, to respect, to cooperate in harmony with the doctors and other health staff to purpose the best for the patient, while maintaining the scientific independence
5. **Cooperation between the physiotherapist and the health authorities (Ministry of Health - Hospitals - Insurance Organizations)**

(Articles 20-22)

**PT must:**

- Provide the necessary services and to assist the authorities in their work to promote public health, in accordance with the rules of science and the applicable provisions
- Have a perfect knowledge of the laws and regulations concerning the profession
- Participate in public education programs, providing information on the profession
6. Advertisement
(Articles 23-28)

- Prohibited in any way publicly advertising of the Physiotherapist (press, electronic media, posting, distribution of printed materials, etc.)

- Billboards of private practice of Physiotherapy should indicate only: “Physiotherapy Practice” or “Physical Therapy”, physiotherapist name or company’s name and specific dimensions (2 x 0.50m)

- PT must avoid any act of charlatanism, fraud and exploitation of his customers

- Prohibited the use of scientific titles which are not acquired or recognized properly

- PT must avoid from acts that lead to unfair competition or unfair partnership with his colleagues or other persons
7. Physiotherapeutic Fee

(Articles 29-36)

- PT provides services for a fee without the right to underestimate the value and propagate in any way that receives lower fee as it is defined by law.

- PT can provide free services or with less amount of money to needy people or economically weak patients without advertise himself or to compete in a fraudulent way his colleagues. Every person who has insurance coverage is not considered needy against Physiotherapist.

- The systematic and intentional price reduction is considered an act of unfair competition and disrespect for the dignity of the profession and the interests of society.
Physiotherapeutic Fee

- PT must be very cautious concerning pay issues, in order to avoid reproaches for speculation or profiteering.

- Prohibited distribution or concession part of physiotherapists' fees or the provision of percentages for doctors or other intermediaries to increase the clients.

- Any breach of the code of ethics is subjected to disciplinary proceedings.

- The validity of the code of ethics of Greece started immediately after its publication in the Government Gazette (Athens, 2 September 2010).
Abbreviations

- WCPT : World Confederation of Physical Therapists
- PAP : Panhellenic Association of Physiotherapists
- PT : Physical Therapist
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Questions?

Thank You