



Presence of Values in Codes of Ethics of Professional Health Science Associations

Julio Piscocoya Arbañil

Research Teacher, National University of Piura-Perú, Peru

ABSTRACT

Objective: To conduct a review of the codes of ethics of professional associations in the health sciences in order to identify the ethical values promoted by each of them.

Material and Methods: A review was carried out on the Codes of Ethics and Deontology of the Professional Associations of Medicine, Nursing, Obstetrics, Psychology, and Dentistry. The inclusion criterion was the current validity of the codes at the time of the research. A comparative documentary analysis technique was used for data collection, for which an Excel-based instrument was designed and adapted.

Results: The professional nursing association promotes a total of 18 principles. The medical association promotes 22, and the obstetricians' association promotes 15. The codes of ethics of the psychology and dentistry associations each include only 5 principles.

Conclusion: There is a numerical difference in the principles promoted by each professional association. A total of 26 ethical principles are promoted and should be known by students before beginning their clinical practice. Therefore, it is proposed to develop a bioethics guide for health sciences students.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received April 06, 2026
Accepted April 10, 2026
Published April 15, 2026

KEYWORDS

Values, Codes of Ethics,
Professional Associations,
Bioethics

Introduction

All human activity requires the implicit application of reasoning and values-ethical conduct that allows us to carry out our professional responsibilities coherently, in the best manner possible, with dignity, benefit, and without harm to our patients. Students of the various health science professions, upon finishing their undergraduate studies, participate in an internship in which they are integrated into health services to apply what they have learned, under a supervised or tutored program during each rotation. This internship has equivalents in countries for nursing, obstetrics, psychology, and dentistry.

It is worth noting that internships vary across countries: in Chile, it lasts 220 hours; in Colombia, two semesters or two years; in Argentina and Ecuador, one year; in Bolivia, two semesters; in Cuba, one year (5 modules); in Brazil, four years of study followed by two years of internship; and in Peru, the internship lasts one year. However, only 53.6% of interns receive an induction course, 60.9% lack a rest environment, 42% receive biosecurity training, and no ethics or bioethics topics are included [1,2].

Considering that teaching practices are evolving-with simulation-based learning replacing potential risks to real patients-we must consider developing codes of ethics for new scenarios such as simulators, robotics, and end-of-life cases, as already done in other contexts [3].

These observations led us to conduct this study on the ethical values present in the codes of the various health professions, aiming to socialize and disseminate them, and eventually propose an ethical-bioethical guide for students before beginning their clinical internships.

Hypothesis: The codes of ethics from different professional associations recommend distinct ethical values in professional practice.

General Objective: To review the codes of ethics of health science professional associations to identify the ethical values they promote.

Specific Objectives:

- To verify which ethical values are promoted by the Codes of Ethics and Deontology of the Medical Association of Peru, Nursing Association of Peru, and Psychology Association of Peru [4,5,6].
- To verify which values are promoted by the Codes of Ethics of the Dental and Obstetrics Associations of Peru [7,8].

Materials and Methods

This is a descriptive-analytical study, as data collection will be used to test the hypothesis. Evidence will be observed as it appears in the professional codes of ethics. The design is cross-sectional, with data collected at a single point in time.

We examined the Codes of Ethics and Deontology of the Professional Associations of Medicine, Nursing, Obstetrics, Psychology, and Dentistry. The analysis units are the individual codes, and the inclusion criterion is the validity of the codes at the time of the study. A comparative documentary analysis was performed using an Excel instrument adapted for the study.

Contact: Julio Piscocoya Arbañil, Research Teacher, National University of Piura-Perú, Peru.

© 2026 The Authors. This is an open access article under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution NonCommercial ShareAlike 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>).

Ethical considerations were respected; no patients were involved, making this an expedited review.

Results

- The **Nursing Association** promotes 18 principles: beneficence, dignity, equality, solidarity, justice, autonomy, integrity, loyalty, respect, civic responsibility, honesty, non-maleficence, discipline, truthfulness, responsibility, ethical conduct, fraternity, and freedom.
- The **Medical Association** promotes 22 principles: beneficence, dignity, equality, solidarity, justice, autonomy, professional competence, integrity, commitment, loyalty, dedication, respect, civic responsibility, excellence, example, non- maleficence, truthfulness, responsibility, freedom, defense of life, competence, and confidentiality.
- The **Obstetrics Association** promotes 15 principles, including many of those mentioned above.
- The **Psychology and Dental Associations** promote only 5 principles each. Psychologists emphasize dignity, solidarity, integrity, respect, and discipline. Dentists promote solidarity, justice, respect, truthfulness, and freedom.

These results are summarized in Table 1

Table 1: Ethical and Deontological Principles in Professional Colleges

	ETHICAL AND DEONTOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES	DOCTOR	NURSES	Psychologists	OBSTETRICIANS	DENTISTS
1	CHARITY	X	X		X	
2	DIGNITY	X	X	X		
3	EQUALITY	X	X			
4	SOLIDARITY	X	X	X	X	X
5	JUSTICE	X	X		X	X
6	AUTONOMY	X	X		X	
7	PROFESSIONAL CAPACITY	X				
8	INTEGRITY	X	X	X	X	
9	COMMITMENT	X			X	
10	LOYALTY	X	X		X	
11	DEDICATION	X			X	
12	CIVIC	X	X	X	X	X
13	RESPONSIBILITY	X	X			
14	EXCELLENCE	X			X	
15	EXAMPLE	X				
16	HONESTY		X			
17	NO MALFEASANCE		X		X	
18	DISCIPLINE		X	X		
19	VERACITY	X	X			X
20	RESPONSIBILITY	X	X		X	
21	ETHICAL CONDUCT		X			
22	BROTHERHOOD		X			
23	FREEDOM	X	X			X
24	DEFENSE OF LIFE	X			X	
25	COMPETITION	X			X	
26	CONFIDENTIALITY	X			X	

Discussion

According to Table 1, a total of 26 ethical principles are promoted across the five professional associations.

- The **Nursing Association** includes 18 principles
- The **Medical Association** includes 22
- The **Obstetrics Association** includes 15
- The **Psychology and Dental Associations** include only 5 each

Only two principles-**solidarity** and **respect**-are found in all five codes. Meanwhile, eight values appear in only one code: professional competence, example, honesty, ethical conduct, fraternity, defense of life, competence, and confidentiality.

From our perspective, students nearing graduation and entering clinical practice need to understand the normative ethical-bioethical framework that guides their work. As Páucar C. states, "Without ethical foundation, reason becomes humanity's greatest scourge." The formation of moral consciousness is also a core objective of education. Despite each school having a code of ethics endorsed by its professional association, the values promoted vary. Therefore, we suggest developing a unified ethical guide including all 26 principles, which should be introduced during training before students begin their internships. Evaluating students' adherence to these principles would also be advisable [9].

As Gracia D. asserts in *Ethics at the Edges of Life*: "The ethical problems posed by modern medicine are so numerous and complex that it is difficult to address them all sufficiently." [10].

Cataldi A. also notes that bioethics, due to rapid historical changes, now requires a fundamentally humanitarian approach, not just logical reasoning [11].

Challenges like human embryo use, cloning, artificial fertilization, and dysthanasia must be addressed, while maintaining alignment with declarations like that of the World Medical Association (WMA), Pilanesberg, South Africa, October 2006, which outlines the general duties of physicians toward patients and colleagues [12,13].

Finally, the adoption of an ethical code during simulation-based teaching helps prevent future unethical behaviors in real practice. Ethical codes reinforce learning. We might even consider **Isaac Asimov's three laws of robotic ethics**, extending them to include ethical treatment of simulators, cyborgs, and digital automatons.

References

- [1] Díaz V. C. CMP The medical internship, from the university to hospital reality. Available at: The medical internship in Peru - DOKUMEN.TIPS.
- [2] Spainexchange.com. Medical studies in Brazil [Internet]. 2023; Available at: <https://www.spainexchange.com/en/studying-abroad/search-academic-program-country-23-BR.html>.
- [3] Gutiérrez F MM. Code of Ethics for teaching-learning scenarios in Health Sciences with clinical simulation [Internet]. September. 2019; Available at: <http://ojs.cbc.uba.ar/index.php/redes/article/view/114>.
- [4] CMP. Code of Ethics and Deontology of the Medical College of Peru. Modified by Resolution No. 216 CN- CMP - 2023 [Internet]. 2023; Available at: [Actualizacion-Codigo-de-etica-ultima-revision-por-el-comite-de-doctrina01feb.pdf](http://actualizacion-codigo-de-etica-ultima-revision-por-el-comite-de-doctrina01feb.pdf) (cmp.org.pe).
- [5] 2007 C of E. Code of Ethics and Deontology of the College of Nurses of Peru. Statutes. Law 29011 [Internet]. edition. Available at: <https://deperu.com/legislacion/ley-29011-pdf.html>.
- [6] C de P. College of Psychologists of Peru. Code of Ethics [Internet]. 2011; Available at: <http://blog.pucp.edu.pe/blog/wp-content/uploads/sites/39/2011/09/Codigo-de-Etica-del-Colegio-de-Psicologos-del-Peru.pdf>.
- [7] C de O. Code of Ethics and Professional Deontology of the College of Obstetricians of Peru [Internet]. July . 1979; Available at: http://crosanmartin.com/images/articulo/normaslegales_09-08-2017-12-13-47.pdf.
- [8] C de O. Code of ethics and deontology of the college of dentists of Peru [Internet]. October 2008; Available at: https://issuu.com/colegiodontologicodelima/docs/codigo_de_etica_y_deontologia.
- [9] Páucar C. Criteria of reason and professional ethics. Jirón Canta 530 - Lima: Mantaro; 2006.
- [10] García D. *Ethics at the Borders of Life*. Lavalle 1208. City of Buenos Aires.: Editorial ASTREA. 2nd Ed. 2022.
- [11] Cataldi AR. Bioethics, conflicts, and dilemmas. Autonomous City of Buenos Aires: HYGEEA EDICIONES; March 2019.
- [12] Oguisso Taka. Reflections on Ethics and Nursing in Latin America. Index Enferm [Internet]. 2006; 15: 49-53.
- [13] Vera Carrasco O, The code of ethics in medicine. Rev. Med. La Paz. July- December 2015; 21.