

Policy

Subject: Code of Ethics
Approval Date: November 2014, February 2016
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Review By: Board of Directors
Number: 3/2014

Fellows and members of the College are dedicated to the following ethical principles in the practice of pathology:

1. To practice pathology with the aim of preventing, diagnosing and treating ill health. This includes practicing with scientific rigour as well as with honesty, compassion and respect for human dignity.
2. To understand and respect patient autonomy and confidentiality. This includes when considering the involvement of patients, body parts, human tissue or other biospecimens in research, teaching and quality activities and when collecting, storing and transmitting information related to individual patients and their families.
3. To protect patients from harm. This includes commitment by each individual to the achievement and maintenance of clinical competence and professional standards; to referring issues beyond their clinical competence, scope of practice or accreditation; and, taking appropriate action when the conduct or lack of competence of others places patients at risk of harm.
4. To approach the practice of pathology with the aim of meeting patient needs appropriately and fairly. This includes maintaining professional integrity; recognising and eliminating conflicts of interest that interfere with free and independent medical or scientific judgment; treating fellow pathologists, trainees, scientists and other colleagues with respect and practicing in a manner that does not exploit, discriminate against, harass or treat unfairly any individual patient, group of patients, colleague, stakeholder or community.

The College can assist members with advice in applying these principles to specific circumstances.

The following is a selection of College documents which relate to ethical pathology practice that members may find useful:

Position Statement 2/2001: The role of the pathologist
Position Statement 2/2010: Marketing of pathology tests
Position Statement 3/2001: Patenting of human genes
Position Statement 1/2009: Pathologists working in isolation

Policy 12/1999: Discrimination and harassment
Policy 13/1999: Complaints Handling
Policy 1/2001: Vertical integration in medical practice
Policy 4/2000: Prohibited Practices: Items and services pathologists may provide in the collection of pathology samples
Policy 3/2004: Ethical responsibility of pathologists in relation to test utility

Policy 2/1999: Provision of second and subsequent opinions with particular reference to histopathology cytology and specimens for morphological examination
Policy 2/2014: Suspension or withdrawal of pathology laboratory accreditation

Guideline 4/2003: The ethical and legal issues in relation to the use of human tissue and tests results in Australia

Guideline 1/2012: Design of research studies and abnormal pathology test results

Guideline 5/2014: Biobanking

Guideline 5/2001: Consent for venepuncture

Guideline 1/2001: The relationship between Fellows and the healthcare industry

Guideline 2/2007: Tendering for pathology services

Guideline 2/2014: Managing privacy information in laboratories

Guideline 1/2004: Referral advice on pathology reports

Guideline 2/2001: Release of pathology results to patients

Guideline 2/2013: Transfer of specimens between different pathology providers