

Case Studies in Pharmacy Ethics

Robert M. Veatch, Any Haddad

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Every pharmacist constantly makes ethical choices. Sometimes these choices are dramatic, life-and-death decisions, but often they are more subtle, less conspicuous choices that are nonetheless important. Assisted suicide, conscientious refusal, pain management, equitable and efficacious distribution of drug resources within institutions and managed care plans, confidentiality, and alternative and non-traditional therapies are among the issues that are of unique concern to pharmacists. One way of seeing the implications of such issues and the moral choices they pose is to look at the experiences and the choices that have had to be made in situations typically faced by pharmacists. This book is a collection of those situations based on the real experiences of practicing pharmacists. The use of case studies in health care ethics is not new, but in pharmacy it is. This text is an important teaching tool that will help pharmacy students and pharmacists address the increasing number of ethical problems arising in their profession. It is not merely a compilation of cases, but rather is organized for the systematic study of applied ethics. Part I shows how to distinguish ethical problems from other kinds of evaluative judgments and examines the sources of values in pharmacy, posing basic questions about the meaning and justification of ethical claims. Part II explores the basic principles of ethics as they have an impact on pharmacy. Specific cases from clinical settings present in a systematic way the various questions raised by each of the major ethical principles: benefiting the patient; distributing resources justly; respecting autonomy; dealing honestly with patients; keeping promises of confidentiality; and avoiding killing. Part III examines some of the special problems of contemporary pharmacy such as the linkages between pharmaceutical care and professional practice, human experimentation, reproductive issues, genetic technology, death and dying, and mental health.



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