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PRESENTATION

The study of medical ethics is urgently needed

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In 2011, in an issue of the journal *Residência Pediátrica* [RP], I had the honor of writing the article "*A Sociedade Brasileira tem um novo Código de* Ética *Médica*" ["Brazilian society has a new code of medical ethics"]. This referred to the current Code, which was completed in 2009 and came into force in 2010. Since that time, I have had the opportunity to see seven articles published here, six on the topic of medical ethics, and as a member of the editorial Executive Editorial Board I have witnessed the growth and editorial development that has taken place. RP is now an international scientific journal of fundamental importance, not only to residents but also to doctors who have been working in the field for some time since graduating, as well as medical students.

Now, we are once again beginning a review of the Code, under the coordination of the CFM (Brazilian National Council of Medicine) and the National Code of Medical Ethics Review Commission, with the participation of the Regional Councils of Medicine (CRMs) and their state committees. Any physician currently enrolled in the CRMs can propose suggestions. We will present an updated Code of Medical Ethics, probably in 2018, which will be available to physicians and society at large. This revision is necessary to keep up with the progress of science in general, and medicine in particular, as well as the social and cultural changes in Brazilian and global society that are occurring with such speed.

Few professions have a Code of Ethics that is as important and as influential on the profession as ours. The Code is a guideline that must be followed, protecting physicians and society against improper conduct that may result from breaches of the doctor-patient-family relationship, insufficient training, ignorance of the Code, or for a small number of doctors, bad intentions. Considering that Rio de Janeiro is the second-largest state with 63,694 practicing physicians (the highest number of doctors in the country), and that more than a million procedures were performed here in 2015 by doctors of the Brazilian Unified Health System (SUS), only 667 complaints were received by CREMERJ in 2015.

The indiscriminate opening of medical schools, along with poor quality teaching, precarious labor relationships, extremely negative working conditions, and wages that are not commensurate with the technical and scientific knowledge and responsibility required in our everyday work, as well as the fruits of mismanagement, incompetence and inaction by managers at all three levels of government, not to mention corruption, have all had a negative influence on the statistics for ethical and professional complaints and legal actions.

On the other hand, few medical schools and residency services bother to include the study of medical ethics and the Code in their curricula. Due to its importance, the Code should be a compulsory object of study, present throughout the undergraduate and postgraduate studies. There is an urgent need to implement it.

In Rio de Janeiro, *Educação Médica Continuada*, a continuing education program for medical professionals promoted for the past 15 years by CREMERJ/SOPERJ, continues to include a "Focus on Ethics" in its planning for each pediatrics session. The current directors of the SBP will make investments so that the Pediatrics Societies of each State will discuss the Code at its events, and in medical schools across the country.

Congratulations to the editorial board of RRP for their initiative in bringing this Supplement.

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