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Code of Professional Conduct for Practitioners in Respiratory and Sleep Physiology

1. Introduction

This Code of Professional Conduct is prepared as a guide for Respiratory and Sleep Technicians, Physiologists and Scientists (herein, referred to as 'The Practitioner') working at all levels with patients receiving health care. The practitioner/patient relationship requires the patient's trust in the practitioner. This trust depends upon the patient's assurance of being the prime concern during the clinical encounter, and upon the patient's confidence that the care received will be competent, whether in diagnosis, treatment or support.

2. Standard of care and practice

Patients are entitled to the highest standard of practice and care at all times. The essence of the standards are professional competence, good relationships with patients and colleagues and observance of professional ethical obligations. In providing care you must therefore:

- Achieve and continuously maintain high standards of competence.
- Follow local or nationally developed standard operating procedures for clinical practice.
- Recognise the limits of your professional competence. You must identify and decline to undertake any area of work which you know or believe to be outside your clinical competence.
- Be willing to consult colleagues and other service providers when additional knowledge and expertise is required.
- Be truthful, competent, and accurate, when performing and reporting respiratory and sleep physiological procedures/treatment.
- Keep accurate, legible, factual and contemporaneous records and reports in order to provide information for professional colleagues and for legal purposes as necessary (see local guidelines).
- Ensure effective and appropriate use of resources.
- Keep colleagues informed.
- Conduct yourself in a professional manner appropriate to the setting.

3. Maintenance of Trust

To maintain and establish trust you must:

- Provide health care on the basis of clinical need.



- Respect patients' privacy, dignity, personal and protected characteristics.
- Listen to patients and respect their views.
- Treat patients considerately and politely.
- Give clear information to patients in an appropriate form.
- Respect the right of patients to refuse diagnostics/treatment or to take part in teaching or research, reporting the refusal to the person requesting the procedure.
- Respect the right of patients to be fully involved in all decisions about their care.
- Ensure that your personal views about a patient's personal and protected characteristics, do not prejudice the service you give. In addition, not sharing your personal views/beliefs if it could cause upset/distress to an individual.
- Respond to complaints promptly and constructively.
- Patients have a right to expect that you will keep personal information obtained in the course of your professional duties in the strictest of confidence unless they agree otherwise.
- Provide services to all patients in an equitable manner.
- Personal electronic devices should not be used for personal reasons in the presence of patients.
- Duty of Candour, to be open and honest about mistakes and follow correct procedure for reporting issues.

4. Abuse of professional position

You must not abuse your patients' trust. It would be inappropriate to:-

- Improperly disclose or misuse confidential information about a patient to a third party.
- Use your position to establish improper personal relationships with patients or their close relatives.
- Influence your patient to give money or other benefits to you or other people.

5. Protection of patients

You have a duty to protect patients if you believe that a colleague's conduct, performance or health presents a threat to them. The safety of patients is the primary concern at all times. You should do your best to establish the facts before taking action. Then, if necessary, you must tell someone from the employing authority, ideally an individual's line manager. If issues are unresolved it may be necessary to raise with a regulatory body. Under no circumstances must any Practitioner who witnesses malpractice, whether by a colleague or other professional remain silent about it. Your comments about colleagues must be honest, factual and where possible supported with evidence. If you are unsure what to do, ask an experienced colleague.



6. Protection of practitioners

You have a duty to protect yourself and colleagues from situations that may be deemed uncomfortable or could result in harm. Individuals should not be left as a lone worker without the necessary support to maintain their safety. Potential situations should be assessed for risk and discussed with colleagues. You have the right to remove yourself from situations that may be deemed threatening and seek support from colleagues.

7. Your health as a risk to patients

If you have or are carrying a serious communicable condition, or if your judgement or performance could be significantly affected by a condition or illness, you must take and follow advice from your local Occupational Health Department, or another suitably qualified person on whether and in what ways you should modify your practice. Individuals should be familiar with local policies relating to ill health. Do not rely on your own assessment of the risk to patients. It is your responsibility to seek further advice from your Occupational Health Department. If you think you have or are carrying a serious communicable condition you must have all the necessary tests. You must then act on the advice given to you by a qualified medical practitioner about necessary treatment and/or modification to the clinical service you are committed to give.

8. Maintaining up to date knowledge

You are responsible for maintaining and developing your personal and professional competence throughout your career. You should take part regularly in educational activities which relate to the clinical application of respiratory and/or sleep science and technology. The ARTP recommends that all members attend - at least one National professional meeting/course and at least two local/in house training meetings per year. You should be aware of current legal issues which affect your practice. You must work with colleagues to assess and improve the quality of the service which is provided. New standards and guidance should be brought to the attention of colleagues for review and implementation, to ensure current best practice is followed for the benefits of patient care.

9. Teaching and Training

The ARTP encourages you to contribute to the education and training of colleagues. All competent practitioners should be prepared to supervise and support less experienced colleagues. If you have special responsibilities for teaching you should develop the skills of a competent teacher. If you are responsible for training junior colleagues you must ensure they are adequately supervised.

10. Working with colleagues

You must not give grounds for a patient or relative to doubt a colleague's knowledge, competence or skills through any comments you may make. You will undoubtedly be working in a multi-disciplinary team. You are expected to work constructively within such teams and to acknowledge the skill and contribution of colleagues. You must ensure that any information you possess or acquire that has a bearing on the clinical management of a patient is communicated promptly and fully to those individuals who need to know. This may include clear documentation in patient records. If you are leading a team, you must always make sure that the whole team understands the need to provide a polite and effective service, and to treat patient information as confidential.



11. Hospitality and Gifts

You should check local and national conflicts of interest policies for details on what hospitality and gifts can be accepted. You may need to declare hospitality and gifts that were received over a certain limit. You may accept only limited personal travel grants and hospitality from organisations/companies for educational conferences or meetings. The amount you receive must not be more than you would normally spend if you were paying to attend. Any accepted hospitality or gift that needs a declaration will also need the individual recipient to be able to justify its acceptance. Declaration of commercial sponsorship must be submitted through your employer. You must not ask for or accept fees for agreeing to meet sales representatives. You may accept an honorarium for presenting/talking about professional issues provided it is in an educational forum (i.e. not promotional). You should not ask for, or accept from companies, any rewards, except those of insignificant value.

12. Research and Development

Members of the profession shall promote understanding of respiratory technology and physiology to the widest possible audience. If you are taking part in clinical trials, or any other form of patient based research, you must make sure that the research is not contrary to the patient's interests. Ensure that the research protocol has been approved by a properly constituted research ethics committee. You must adhere to all aspects of the research protocol. Your conduct in the research must not be influenced by payments or gifts. You must always record your research results truthfully and maintain adequate records. In publishing the results you must not make unjustified claims for authorship.

13. Decisions as a practitioner

You must always be prepared to explain and justify your actions and decisions.



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