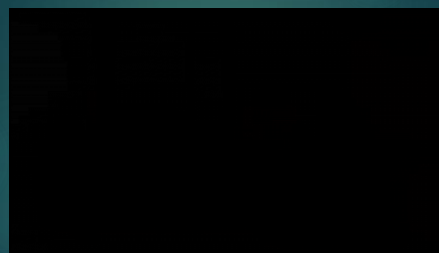


# Ethics in the Operatory

ACLM Annual Meeting  
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Austin, Texas

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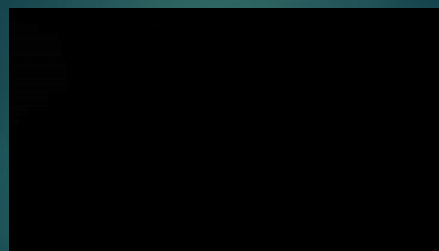


Perform an ethical analysis of D's decision to inform the mother of Patient's pregnancy using the following model:

## Ethical Analysis

1. State the ethical dilemma
2. List at least three (3) viable ethically based alternatives
3. Identify all applicable Central Values, Professional Obligations, ADA Principles of Ethics and legal issues, and analyze and apply each to the dentist's conduct in the video
4. Rank your alternatives and give ethically based justification for ranking each alternative

Identify any other ethical dilemmas or violations in this scenario.



## Ethical Analysis

1. State the ethical dilemma and Ethical Principles in Conflict
  - ▶ Understand and evaluate the facts and what is unknown
  - ▶ Determine which principles and professional obligations are applicable and which may be in conflict

## Ethical Analysis

1. State the ethical dilemma and Ethical Principles in conflict
  - ▶ Does D have an ethical obligation to tell M about P's pregnancy (beneficence, non-maleficence)?
  - or
  - ▶ Does D have an ethical obligation to respect P's (a minor) confidential information (autonomy)?
    - ▶ Missing information: reasons P requests D not tell M, P's plan for pregnancy, unknown family consequences

## Ethical Analysis

2. List all viable, ethically based alternatives

## Ethical Analysis

2. List all viable, ethically based alternatives (Minimum of 3)
  - A. Convince P to discuss pregnancy with M and not tell M
  - B. Convince P to discuss pregnancy with M and, if P does not, then D will tell M
  - C. D tell M about P's pregnancy without informing P or trying to convince P to tell M
  - D. D not tell M and delays treatment

## Ethical Analysis

3. Identify and provide an analysis of all applicable Professional Obligations, Central Values, ADA Principles of Ethics and legal issues

## Content of Dentist's Professional Obligations

### a. 9 Categories of Professional Obligations

1. The Chief Client
2. The Ideal Relationship between Dentist and Patient
3. The Central Values of the Dental Profession
4. Competence
5. Sacrifice and the Relative Priority of the Patient's Well Being
6. Ideal Relationship between Co-Professionals
7. The Relationship between Dentistry and the Larger Community
8. Availability of Services
9. Integrity and Education

Dental Ethics at Chairside, Ozar D and Sokol D, Georgetown University Press, 2002, p. 36-41.

## Content of Dentist's Professional Obligations

### b. Ranking Dentistry's Central Values

- ▶ 1. The patient's life and general health
- ▶ 2. The patient's oral health
- ▶ 3. The patient's autonomy
- ▶ 4. The dentist's preferred patterns of practice
- ▶ 5. Aesthetic values
- ▶ 6. Efficiency in the use of resources

▶ Dental Ethics at Chairsides. Ozar D and Sokol D, Georgetown University Press, 2002, p.38, 73.

## Ethical Analysis: Summary of Content of Dentist's Professional Obligations

### I. Profession – Community Understanding

- a. Dentistry's Central Values
- b. 9 Categories of Professional Obligations
- c. Models of Dentist-Patient Relationship
- d. View of Dental Profession

### II. Dental Organization Codes

### III. State Dental Practice Acts

## Ethical Analysis

- ▶ **Autonomy (Self-Governance) of patient and fetus**
  - ▶ Allow patient autonomous control over personal information and protect trust in dentist-patient relationship
- ▶ **Beneficence (Do Good)**
- ▶ **Maleficence (Do No Harm)**

## Ethical Analysis

- Encourage P to have x-ray (meet standard criteria for exposure and disclose to patient), and restorative treatment during second trimester (**protect P and fetus**)
- Determine unknown risks
- Encourage P to disclose to M (**protect P and fetus**)
- If no further treatment was required, i.e., no large carious lesions, then likely keep confidential (**protect P from unknown risks from family, etc.**)

## Ethical Analysis

- ▶ Are there any circumstances when D would be ethically justified in breaching a patient's right to confidentiality?

## Circumstances which ethically justify breach of patient confidentiality

1. Confidentiality may pose risk of harm to patient or other third parties (fetus) or the community ("Non-maleficence")
2. Disclosure is necessary to reduce or eliminate such risk ("Beneficence")
3. Disclosure is accomplished with the least possible loss of patient privacy
4. Justification for disclosure is disclosed to patient. ("Autonomy")

## Ethical Analysis

4. Rank alternatives and provide an ethically-based justification for each alternative

## Ethical Analysis

### Ranked Alternatives:

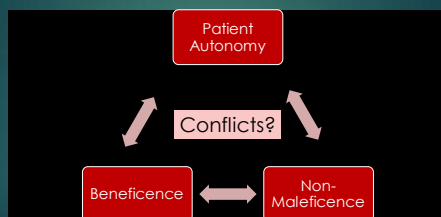
- A. Convince P to discuss pregnancy with M and do not tell M
- B. Convince P to discuss pregnancy with M and, if P does not, then D will tell M
- C. D tell M about P's pregnancy without informing P or trying to convince P to tell M
- D. D not tell M and delays treatment

Identify any other ethical dilemmas or violations in this scenario.

## Ethical Dilemmas or Violations in this Case

1. Mother's fraudulent request to switch insurance codes
2. Dentist's disclosure of confidential information in present of patient in waiting room
3. Dentist's unilateral decision to recommend extraction over endo because of financial limitations without discussion with Mother and emancipated patient
4. Prescription for medical treatment for Mother and pain pills beyond the scope of practice and possible abuse
5. Duty to refer patient for counseling

## Ethical Principles Balance: Defines You as a Dentist



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