Ethical issues concerning glove use and infection control

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Agenda

• Ethics in medicine
• Current issues in Germany
• Glove use
• Universal precautions
• Avoiding infections
• Ethics and Ebola
Ethics in medicine

• Historically, Western medical ethics may be traced to guidelines on the duty of physicians in antiquity, such as the Hippocratic Oath, and early Christian teachings.
Ethics in medicine

- The first code of medical ethics, *Formula Comitis Archiatrorum*, was published in the 5th century, during the reign of the Ostrogothic king Theodoric the Great.
Ethics in medicine

• A common framework used in the analysis of medical ethics is the "four principles" approach postulated by Tom Beauchamp and James Childress in their textbook *Principles of biomedical ethics.*
Ethics in medicine

• Respect for **autonomy** - the patient has the right to refuse or choose his or her treatment. (Voluntas aegroti suprema lex.)

• **Beneficence** - a practitioner should act in the best interest of the patient. (Salus aegroti suprema lex.)
Ethics in medicine

• Non-maleficence - "first, do no harm" (primum non nocere).

• Justice - concerns the distribution of scarce health resources, and the decision of who gets what treatment (fairness and equality). (Iustitia.)
Ethics in medicine

• Other values include:

• Respect for persons - the patient (and the person treating the patient) have the right to be treated with dignity.
Ethics in medicine

• Other values include:
  • Truthfulness and honesty - the concept of informed consent has increased in importance since the historical events of the Doctors' Trial of the Nuremberg trials and Tuskegee syphilis experiment.
Current issues in Germany concerning medical ethics:

- Organ donation scandal
- Legalising assisted suicide
Current issues in Germany concerning medical ethics:

• Organ donation scandal

German medical authorities are calling for an extensive overhaul of the country's organ transplant programme after transplant centres across Germany were placed under criminal investigation over allegations that they had systematically manipulated donor waiting lists.
Current issues in Germany concerning medical ethics:

• Organ donation scandal

Scores of patients are believed to have been given priority access to donor organs after doctors falsified the severity of their illnesses to ensure they received treatment ahead of other patients.
Current issues in Germany concerning medical ethics:

- Organ donation scandal

In the first six months of 2013, there were 18.3 percent fewer organ donations in Germany compared to the same period in 2012. The number of transplant operations during this time fell by 12.3 percent to 1686.