

SECTION 3: Medical Ethics & Reasoning (40 Questions)

1. A patient refuses a blood transfusion due to religious beliefs, even though death is likely without it. The physician should:
 - A) Override the patient's wishes because the physician knows best
 - B) Respect the patient's decision if they have decision-making capacity
 - C) Request a court order immediately
 - D) Administer the transfusion and document it as an emergency
2. The principle of beneficence in medical ethics refers to:
 - A) Treating all patients equally
 - B) Acting in the best interest of the patient
 - C) Allowing patients to make their own decisions
 - D) Avoiding actions that cause harm
3. Which ethical principle is most directly violated when a physician shares a patient's diagnosis with their employer without consent?
 - A) Beneficence
 - B) Nonmaleficence
 - C) Confidentiality/Autonomy
 - D) Justice
4. A 15-year-old seeks treatment for a sexually transmitted infection and asks the physician not to tell their parents. In most jurisdictions, the physician should:
 - A) Always notify the parents
 - B) Treat the minor and maintain confidentiality
 - C) Refuse treatment without parental consent
 - D) Notify the school counselor
5. The doctrine of informed consent requires that the patient:
 - A) Signs a form before any procedure
 - B) Understands the nature, risks, benefits, and alternatives of a proposed treatment
 - C) Has a family member present during the discussion
 - D) Agrees with the physician's recommendation
6. Which of the four principles of biomedical ethics is best illustrated by fair distribution of healthcare resources?
 - A) Autonomy

- B) Beneficence
 - C) Nonmaleficence
 - D) Justice
7. A patient with dementia cannot make medical decisions. Who is the most appropriate surrogate decision-maker?
- A) The attending physician
 - B) A previously designated healthcare proxy or next of kin
 - C) The hospital ethics committee
 - D) A social worker
8. Therapeutic privilege refers to:
- A) A physician's right to experimental treatments
 - B) Withholding information if disclosure would harm the patient
 - C) Providing free care to indigent patients
 - D) A patient's right to refuse hospitalization
9. A physician has a financial stake in a laboratory they refer patients to. This is an example of:
- A) Evidence-based medicine
 - B) A conflict of interest
 - C) Standard of care
 - D) Fiduciary responsibility
10. Which of the following best describes "futile treatment" in a medical context?
- A) Treatment that is experimental
 - B) Treatment unlikely to produce any significant benefit for the patient
 - C) Treatment that is too expensive
 - D) Treatment refused by the patient
11. A physician should disclose a medical error to a patient because:
- A) It is required by law in all circumstances
 - B) Transparency and honesty are core ethical duties
 - C) It protects the physician from malpractice
 - D) It is only necessary if the error caused serious harm
12. The concept of "substituted judgment" in surrogate decision-making means:
- A) The surrogate makes the decision they think is best for the patient
 - B) The surrogate decides based on what the patient would have wanted
 - C) A judge determines treatment options
 - D) The physician substitutes their judgment for the patient's
13. Which of the following is an example of passive euthanasia?
- A) Administering a lethal injection
 - B) Assisting a patient in obtaining medications for self-administration
 - C) Withdrawing mechanical ventilation at the patient's request
 - D) Providing high-dose opioids to accelerate death

14. The "Rule of Double Effect" is used to justify:
 - A) Treating two conditions simultaneously
 - B) An action with both a beneficial and a harmful outcome, where harm is unintended
 - C) Experimental treatments used on two patient populations
 - D) Prescribing two medications that interact

15. A patient asks their doctor not to reveal their terminal cancer diagnosis to their family. The doctor should:
 - A) Tell the family anyway for their emotional preparation
 - B) Honor the patient's wishes and keep the information confidential
 - C) Compromise by telling the immediate next of kin only
 - D) Refer the patient to a psychiatrist

16. Mandatory reporting laws most commonly require physicians to report:
 - A) Drug use by patients
 - B) Child abuse, certain infectious diseases, and gunshot wounds
 - C) Financial fraud discovered during a patient visit
 - D) All mental health diagnoses

17. Which of the following best defines "medical paternalism"?
 - A) A patient making decisions for themselves
 - B) A physician overriding a patient's wishes "for their own good"
 - C) Equal distribution of medical resources
 - D) Providing informed consent to patients

18. An advance directive (living will) primarily serves to:
 - A) Designate financial power of attorney
 - B) Communicate a patient's treatment preferences in case they lose decision-making capacity
 - C) Allow a physician to make all future treatment decisions
 - D) Transfer care to another physician

19. Which ethical framework focuses on the greatest good for the greatest number of people?
 - A) Deontology
 - B) Virtue ethics
 - C) Utilitarianism
 - D) Principlism

20. A physician refuses to treat a patient because of their race. This violates which principle most directly?
 - A) Nonmaleficence
 - B) Beneficence
 - C) Justice and non-discrimination
 - D) Autonomy

21. Research involving human subjects must adhere to which foundational document?
- A) The Hippocratic Oath
 - B) The Belmont Report
 - C) The AMA Code of Ethics
 - D) The Geneva Protocol
22. Which of the following is NOT a requirement for valid informed consent?
- A) Disclosure of relevant information
 - B) Patient comprehension
 - C) Physician approval of the patient's decision
 - D) Voluntariness
23. A physician learns that a patient is planning to seriously harm an identified third party. The physician's legal and ethical obligation is known as:
- A) The Good Samaritan law
 - B) Duty to warn (Tarasoff duty)
 - C) HIPAA exception
 - D) Mandatory reporting of violence
24. Organ allocation in transplant medicine is primarily governed by principles of:
- A) Patient wealth and social status
 - B) Medical urgency, compatibility, and equitable access
 - C) Physician preference
 - D) Geographic proximity to the hospital
25. Which of the following best describes the ethical concept of "nonmaleficence"?
- A) Doing good for the patient
 - B) First, do no harm
 - C) Treating all patients equally
 - D) Respecting patient decisions
26. A physician who continues to treat a patient after the patient fires them may be liable for:
- A) Abandonment
 - B) Battery
 - C) Negligence
 - D) Breach of confidentiality
27. In clinical research, a placebo-controlled trial raises ethical concerns when:
- A) Participants are randomized
 - B) A known effective treatment exists and withholding it causes harm
 - C) The study is double-blinded
 - D) Consent forms are too long
28. Which of the following best describes "therapeutic misconception" in research ethics?
- A) A researcher misrepresenting study results

- B) A participant incorrectly believing research participation is primarily for their personal benefit
 - C) A physician mixing up therapeutic and experimental treatments
 - D) A conflict between researcher and sponsor
29. A competent adult patient refuses chemotherapy for cancer, preferring holistic treatment. The ethical response is to:
- A) Refer them for psychiatric evaluation
 - B) Respect their autonomy while ensuring they are fully informed
 - C) Administer chemotherapy under implied consent
 - D) Discharge the patient
30. The concept of "justice" in healthcare ethics most directly relates to:
- A) Punishing unethical physicians
 - B) Fair and equitable treatment and distribution of resources
 - C) Following legal regulations exactly
 - D) Ensuring physicians act in their own interest
31. Which of the following is an example of active euthanasia?
- A) Removing a feeding tube
 - B) Discontinuing dialysis at a patient's request
 - C) Administering a lethal injection at the patient's request
 - D) Providing palliative sedation
32. Physician-assisted suicide is currently legal in which of the following U.S. states?
- A) Texas
 - B) New York
 - C) Oregon
 - D) Florida
33. In clinical ethics, the "best interest" standard is typically applied when:
- A) The patient has expressed clear prior wishes
 - B) No surrogate is available and the patient lacks capacity
 - C) A court order has been obtained
 - D) The patient is a legal adult
34. Triage in emergency medicine is an application of which ethical principle?
- A) Autonomy
 - B) Beneficence
 - C) Justice
 - D) Nonmaleficence
35. Which of the following scenarios most clearly represents a violation of patient confidentiality?
- A) Sharing de-identified patient data for research
 - B) Reporting a patient's contagious disease to public health authorities
 - C) Telling a patient's employer their diagnosis without consent
 - D) Discussing a case in a medical education setting without identifying the patient

36. Which ethical framework emphasizes moral duties regardless of consequences?
- A) Utilitarianism
 - B) Virtue ethics
 - C) Consequentialism
 - D) Deontology
37. A patient with depression expresses suicidal intent. The most appropriate immediate action is:
- A) Respect their autonomy and do nothing
 - B) Prescribe antidepressants and schedule a follow-up
 - C) Assess the seriousness of the risk and consider hospitalization if needed
 - D) Notify law enforcement immediately
38. Which of the following is NOT a core principle outlined in the Belmont Report?
- A) Respect for persons
 - B) Beneficence
 - C) Justice
 - D) Nonmaleficence
39. A patient who is a Jehovah's Witness is brought unconscious to the ER after a car accident. No advance directive is available. The physician should:
- A) Assume refusal of blood products and withhold transfusion
 - B) Attempt to contact family and provide life-saving treatment in the interim
 - C) Wait until the patient regains consciousness
 - D) Consult the hospital's religious advisor before treatment
40. The primary ethical concern with direct-to-consumer genetic testing is:
- A) Cost
 - B) Accuracy of results and potential psychological harm without physician guidance
 - C) Patent violations
 - D) Inability to sequence the full genome

Answer Key

1. B
2. B
3. C
4. B
5. B
6. D
7. B
8. B
9. B
10. B
11. B
12. B
13. C
14. B
15. B
16. B
17. B
18. B
19. C
20. C
21. B
22. C
23. B
24. B
25. B
26. B

- 27. B
- 28. B
- 29. B
- 30. B
- 31. C
- 32. C
- 33. B
- 34. C
- 35. C
- 36. D
- 37. C
- 38. D
- 39. B
- 40. B