



ASSESSMENT DEPARTMENT

DEFINITION OF MEDICAL PROFESSIONALISM

A recent working party of The Royal College of Physicians investigated medical professionalism. Their definition is a full description of the full scope of medical professionalism.

“Medical professionalism signifies a set of values, behaviours and relationships that underpins the trust the public has in doctors”.

Description

In order to set out in more detail the meaning of these values, behaviours and relationships, the College describes medical professionalism in the following way:

“Medicine is a vocation in which a doctor’s knowledge, clinical skills and judgement are put in the service of protecting and restoring human well-being. This purpose is realised through a partnership between patient and doctor, one based on mutual respect, individual responsibility and appropriate accountability.”

In their day-to-day practice, doctors are committed to:

- integrity
- compassion
- altruism
- continuous improvement
- excellence
- working in partnership with members of the wider healthcare team.

A **professional** person not only has particular knowledge and skills, acquired through training and refined by experience, but also agrees to conform to certain standards of personal behaviour and codes of practice.

These values, which underpin the science and practice of medicine, form the basis for a moral contract between the medical profession and society. Each party has a duty to work to strengthen the system of healthcare on which our collective human dignity depends.

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