

**CONVERSATIONS ON EDUCATION**

## **Uncovering ethics through case scenarios and role modeling in medicine**

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## Uncovering ethics through case scenarios and role modeling in medicine

**JNUSTA:** *Jeffrey Chan's article discusses the issue of (the teaching of) ethics in Architecture. Ethics and the teaching of ethics are critical matters in many fields, and perhaps particularly visible in your field – medicine and medical education. What approach do you adopt in infusing ethics into your students' undergraduate training in your medical school?*

**Eng Tat:** I confess that I did not realise that ethics is an issue that is relevant to a school of architecture at all. I have always thought that the preoccupation in architecture is building and rebuilding structures in society! I understand now that architects also have to deliberate over this issue.

In Medicine, the issue of ethics is of great importance. This is primarily because one is dealing with another human being, and with life, as opposed to a building, or the design of the city. At the Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine (NUS) we run classes that stimulate the medical students to think through certain scenarios, and how to approach the problems or issues we often encounter in medical practice. In the later clinical years, these students will often have to confront these issues again, when they manage patients in different situations.

Ethics is taught using a two-pronged approach, i.e., through a seminar-style presentation, and in later instances, the use of case scenarios. Students learnt about ethics by first getting sensitised to the issues via seminar-style presentations, reflecting upon them from both the perspectives of a consumer of health services and later, as a clinical student, they revisit these issues again but this time from the perspective of the health care provider. Students will also benefit through direct observation of teachers and clinicians up close and personal, and are encouraged and guided to form their own judgements.

Our medical school colleagues have never shied away from the task of teaching ethics and they mainly teach ethics by leading, role modeling, so that students can learn through observation and exemplification. For the teachers, the teaching of ethics also serve as timely reminders as to what is right versus what is wrong and the many shades of grey in between.