The Evolution of the Professionalism Movement in Medical Education:
Where we have been, where we are, and where we must go

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“…an extremely bright student. Amazing abilities, lots of medical knowledge. Does well on exams. I would never trust [this student] to take care of my family or anyone for that matter. [The student] is a sociopath. Manipulates the system and patients for personal gain. Is dishonest.”
Professionalism

Past ➔ Present ➔ Future
Timeline

1950-2000

2000-2010

2010-2018
Where We Have Been
What We Know

Articulation & Definition

Identification

Characterization
Era of Articulation and Definition: 1950s to 2000
1950s - 1960s

Evolving articulation

Earliest focus: Professionalisation and belonging to the medical profession
PROFESSIONALISM IN THE HEALTH SERVICE

Sir,—May I comment on the letters you have received on this subject.
I have been accused of uttering "severe strictures" on the medical profession but no-one has said which of the alleged strictures is untrue or stated unfairly.
Dr. Lindsey Ratten (May 2) has, I think, overlooked
But however the N.H.S. is regarded, the efficiency of its organisation and operation is important if what is done to give "medical aid, comfort, and advice to those citizens who need or ask for it" is not to fall short of what could be done with the knowledge, people, and resources available. That is how I view efficiency, and I believe that for its attainment we are largely dependent upon the actions of the free self-governing professions.
Against Dr. Walshe's pronouncement on the distinctive features of a profession (April 25) may be set the conclusions of several authorities (e.g., T. H. Marshall, and Lewis and Maude) who have published dispassionate studies on the subject.

London, N.W.11.

L. FARRER-BROWN.
The Penalty of Professionalism

Gerald D. Dorman, MD

As members of the medical profession, we have the privilege of caring for our fellow human beings. The reason for both—his personal satisfaction and the honor in which he is held—is that no calling more deeply involves any man with his fellow human beings than medicine. He cares for the.

There is no aspect of health, direct or remote, that is not our responsibility, in whole or in part.

Who needs health care? For what? How easily can it be obtained? Who provides it? What are their qualifications? How good is its quality? How will we pay for it? And, how will people and institutions feel about the kind of life in the kind of environment that is conducive to good health? All of those questions, and dozens more we could ask, demand answers from the medical profession, along with all other leadership elements of society.

Our patients—who, throughout recorded history,
1970s: Gradual Change

1950s & 60s

1970s
1980s -1990s: Evolution in Definition of Professionalism

- Ethics
- Maturity
- Interpersonal skills
- Responsibility
- Respect
- Reliability
- Psychological
- Critique
- Altruism
Era of Identification and Characterization: 2000 - 2010
Identification

Bad behavior in medical school leads to bad behavior in practice and in many cases disciplinary action.

Unsolicited and solicited patient report reflect an array of physician professionalism lapses.

Demographic patterns

Identification could have been predicted by personality tests given in the 70s and 80s to medical students.
Characterization

Specific behaviors are more unprofessional than others:

- Lack of reliability
- Lack of responsibility
- Lack of ability to adapt
- Lack of ability to self-improve
Where We Are
Era of Awareness and Action: 2010 - present
Systems View of Professionalism

Expressions of professionalism

- Physician-patient interactions
  - Interactions with care team
  - Practice settings
  - Training environment

External environment
- Payment
- Regulation
- Socioeconomic determinants of health

Influences on professionalism

Strategies to strengthen professionalism
- Develop individual competencies
- Promote physician leadership and supportive organizational culture
- Encourage physician advocacy and engagement in system reform

Lucey et al 2010
Culture

Culture specific
Absence of professionalism education
Hierarchy
Individual vs. collective
Action

There are profiles of unprofessional student behavior and these profiles help us identify and tailor remediation.

The process for identification and remediation must be systematic and centralized throughout the continuum of medical education.

Learners’ response to reports of unprofessional behavior and the process of remediation are the most useful remediation tool.
Where We Must Go
Professionalism and Professional Identity Formation

Identity
Behavior
Virtue

Irby & Hamstra, 2017
Definition of the Positive

Medical Professional

Virtues

Unprofessional

?
List 1
Principles and Values of Professionalism*

Principles
- Primacy of patient welfare
- Patient autonomy
- Social justice

Professional responsibilities
- Professional competence
- Honesty
- Patient confidentiality
- Maintaining appropriate relationships with patients
- Improving quality of care
- Improving access to care
- Just distribution of finite resources
- Scientific knowledge
- Maintaining trust by managing conflicts of interest

* Material for this list was adapted from ABIM Foundation; American Board of Internal Medicine; ACP-ASIM Foundation; American College of Physicians–American Society of Internal Medicine; European Federation of Internal Medicine. Medical professionalism in the new millennium: A physician charter. Ann Intern Med. 2002;136:243–246.
Medical professionalism

is a context-specific understanding of what is socially considered to be ethical, safe, respectful, and dignified healthcare practice

Jha et al., 2015; Monrouxe, 2016; Monrouxe et al. Rees, 2017
Professionalism, Social Accountability, & Equity

Source: Office of Equity and Diversity, Rowan University
Professionalism and Environmental Accountability

Source: Pixaby
Environmental Accountability

Source: Pixaby
In Summary

Take stock of our history
- Celebrate good work
- Remembering our errors

Public scholarship
- Join others
- Produce and use knowledge
- Shift norms and power
Questions?
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Social Accountability