

# The Principles and Rules of Professional Ethics in Psychiatry



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Since its establishment in 1995, the Psychiatric Association of Turkey (TPD) which operates on the principles of “Science, Ethics, and Solidarity”, diligently maintained the observance of ethical boundaries in psychiatric professional practices. In the 21st General Assembly held on April 21, 2024, TPD has accepted the new Ethical Principles Text that has been worked on for a long time. This was the first time the Ethical Principles was updated since the 1st General Assembly of our Association on June 22, 2002, after twenty-two years and nearly two years of work.

Recently, the texts defining the ethical principles established by international psychiatric associations such as the World Psychiatric Association (WPA), the European Psychiatric Association (EPA), the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists (RANCZP), the Royal College of Psychiatrists (RCPsych), and the International Association of Mental Health Professionals Japan (IMPHJ) had been updated to adapt to the requirements of our time and the changes experienced in professional practice. In our country, there was a need to update the text of the Rules of Ethics of Psychiatry accepted by the TPD in 2002 to reflect the constantly changing characteristics of professional practice, interpersonal interactions, and societal norms. For this purpose, the TPD Working Group on Human Rights and Ethics in Psychiatry began working in 2021 to update the Rules of Ethics in Psychiatry, and the TPD Ethics Principles Update Task Force (Ayşe Ceren Kaya, Ayşegül Yay, Berna Diclener Uluğ, Gonca Aşut, İbrahim Fuat Akgül, Raşit Tükel, and Simavi Vahip) was formed.

The TPD Ethics Principles Update Task Force commenced the process by planning a webinar on March 1, 2022,

with Rutger van der Gaag and Jan Wise from the Ethics Committee of the EPA, followed by a workshop on March 27, 2022, involving seven working groups. The workshop, facilitated by the contributions from Abdullah Yıldız, Berna Arda, Cemal Güvercin, Cumhuri İzgi, Gürkan Sert, Şükrü Keleş, and Neyyire Yasemin Yalım from the field of Medical Ethics, began with constructive and enriching discussions which continued for over a month after the initial workshop. The subgroups, defined by seven headings, were as follows: 1. ‘Relationships between patients and their families and physicians’, 2. ‘Telepsychiatry and psychotherapies’, 3. ‘Relationships between colleagues, psychiatrists, and mental health workers from other disciplines’, 4. ‘Relationships with the health industry’, 5. ‘The psychiatrist’s conduct of research and the process of publishing research findings’, 6. ‘Communication and promotional activities and public awareness in psychiatry on the internet, social media, and all publishing platforms (TV, newspaper, magazine, book, etc.)’, and 7. ‘Psychiatry and human rights’. These working groups examined the ethical rules of international psychiatric associations regarding the updating of ethical principles and each prepared their texts.

These drafts provided by the groups were meticulously evaluated by the TPD Ethics Principles Update Task Force starting from June 27, 2022 in terms of both form and content. The Task Force brought together the subjects and headings to create a unified text. After a year of monthly meetings, the first combined version was presented at the TPD Ethics Principles Update Meeting on June 18, 2023, in a meeting attended by participants from the initial workshop. There, the second draft of the updated Ethics Rules was created and

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was shared with the colleagues at the TPD Forum held at the 59th National Psychiatry Congress in October 2023. The contributions in the Forum and from the colleagues externally further enriched this second draft. Through examinations of language, form, and content; the Ethics Principles and Rules text was ensured to have linguistic consistency, to cover practitioners at all levels, and to thoroughly express the essence of ethical responsibilities. Then the final version was presented in the General Assembly for the approval. The text of Professional Ethics Principles and Rules begins with the following statements:

“TPD works for the continuous education and professional development of its members, the improvement and development of the quality of psychiatric services, advocacy for patients and their families, and providing support in all aspects and informing the public. It assumes the responsibility to participate in the work carried out jointly with local and central decision-makers and managers in line with all these purposes.

TPD conducts all these activities with the highest ethical standards. The Principles and Rules of Psychiatry Professional Ethics are a notification of these standards to psychiatrists and the society. Psychiatry Professional Ethics Principles and Rules are based on international agreements, declarations, and national and international ethical principles and rules, including medical ethical principles. The Rules and the Principles are regularly reviewed and updated.”

The TPD Professional Ethics Principles and Rules cover five sections following this introductory section: 1. General Principles, 2. Patient Rights and Physician-Patient Relations, 3. Intercollegiate Relations, 4. Human Rights, and 5. Medical Research and Publication Ethics. The updated text includes subheadings that were not included in the previous text but have become important due to changing conditions in the last twenty years and should not be overlooked, and they are explained in detail. These newly added areas are: ‘Psychotherapies’, ‘Telepsychiatry’, ‘When a colleague has mental illness’, ‘Education and Supervision- Oversight

Responsibility’, ‘Respecting Human Rights, Opposing Discrimination and Stigmatization’, ‘Gender Sensitivity’, ‘Qualified and Accessible Right to Health for Everyone’, and ‘Right to Die with Dignity’.

Significant updates have been made to the contents of some articles included in our previous Ethical Rules document. In the context of this forewords, we would like to give an example from the field of ‘Publication Ethics’. With changing conditions, we stated that new issues have emerged in publication ethics, and there was a need to define new principles and rules. Although the single article on this topic in the 2002 statutory text remains valid today, it has required expansion: “The physician must reflect scientific facts when evaluating research data and preparing for publication. Names of persons who have not actually participated in the study cannot be included in that publication. Data, cases, and written works belonging to others should not be used without citation and permission.” The previous article has been expanded in the new text to include responsibilities such as being aware of predatory journals and not publishing in them, and the responsibility for announcing research results in mass media or new media. Similarly, significant changes and additions have been made under the title of ‘Education and Supervision-Oversight Responsibility’ to suit present-day conditions.

As announced by the Psychiatric Association of Turkey, the updated ‘Psychiatry Professional Ethics Principles and Rules’ text is now presented on our association’s website. It will serve as a basis for maintaining and improving the standards of our professional and scientific practices, our relationships with colleagues, and the health services we provide to patients.

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## REFERENCE

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