

# DEONTOLOGICAL CODE FOR THE PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE OF RADIOLOGY, RADIOTHERAPY AND NUCLEAR MEDICINE TECHNOLOGISTS

This code of ethics was created by the **Medical Imaging and Radiotherapy Portuguese Association (APIMR)** and is intended to serve as a reference guide to the ethical, moral and professional performance of Radiology, Radiotherapy and Nuclear Medicine technologists in their daily professional practice. Several international sources and colleagues were consulted, in order to be adapted to the Portuguese reality.

Deontology is a term used to designate a discipline that focuses on the analysis of the duties and values ruled by **ethics and morals**.

Each professional has a responsibility to comply with the laws, regulations, standards and codes that govern their professional practice in their country. **Moral is a word of Latin origin, which comes from the term *moris* ("custom"). It is a set of beliefs, customs, values and norms of a person or a social group, which works as a guide for action.** It acts like a moral actions guide that are correct (good or positive) and those that are incorrect (bad or negative). **Ethics can be defined as a process, rules or principles that drive the conduct.**

Ethics create a **culture of integrity**; a **positive and supportive atmosphere** that **boosts morale, promotes internal and external loyalty, and enhances reputation. Ethics and professionalism are fundamental for good practice.** The law does not always establish what must be done, as professional ethics do.

Corresponding to the rights and privileges granted to the professionals mentioned above are also certain ethical obligations - **DUTIES** - which can be legal and/or ethical.

**The Radiology, Radiotherapy and Nuclear Medicine Technologist has duties to patients, colleagues, other healthcare professionals, society, the environment and himself.**

## **1- Duties to Patients and Caregivers**

- ▶ **The patients' best interests must be at the top of the professionals' priorities;**
- ▶ **There only should be run procedures for which the professional competence acquired ;**
- ▶ **The most adapted and humanized care for patients must be defended;**
- ▶ **The power entrusted to professionals must not be abused .**
- ▶ **Personal prejudices should not affect personal relationships;**
- ▶ **Always practice the principles of justification, optimization and ALARA;**
- ▶ **Respect patient privacy and confidentiality at all times;**
- ▶ **Facilitate and support the free and informed choices of patients, families or caregivers , including decisions to refuse or discontinue imaging and/or treatment;**
- ▶ **Ensure that the principle of informed consent is maintained throughout the patient's experience;**
- ▶ **Provide excellent health care to all people with respect and dignity, regardless of race, ethnic origin, type of illness, mental or physical capacity;**
- ▶ **Educate patients, families and caregivers by providing information that can be understood and used to make informed decisions about their care;**
- ▶ **Answer patient and family questions completely and honestly within the limits of knowledge;**
- ▶ **Respect the rights of patients and their fragile condition;**
- ▶ **Keep up-to-date knowledge of safety standards relating to the professional's practice and conduct all procedures and examinations in accordance with these standards;**
- ▶ **Intervene in circumstances of abuse or unsafe, incompetent or unethical practice ;**
- ▶ **You must not engage in a personal relationship with any patient or use your position to exploit them sexually, emotionally, socially or financially;**
- ▶ **If possible, avoid providing care or treatment to anyone with whom you have a close personal relationship**

## 2- Duties to Health Professionals

- ▶ Respect other health professionals and human rights;
- ▶ Avoid making unnecessary and unfounded comments about colleagues and the institution;
- ▶ **Develop a sense of duty in providing health care to society;**
- ▶ Act as an active agent in the workteam through observation and communication to obtain pertinent information for the physician to assist in patient diagnosis and treatment;
- ▶ **Treat all individuals with respect** , dignity and without discrimination, acting professionally, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion or social origin;
- ▶ **Exercise cooperatively and communicate effectively with other professionals , placing patients at the center of their work** and recognizing and respecting the contributions of all members of the multidisciplinary team;
- ▶ Report any negligence or patient safety situation to the competent and regulatory bodies;
- ▶ The professional must only accept requests for examinations or treatment **from health professionals accredited and registered for this purpose** , and requests must **be justified**.
- ▶ Be available to provide assistance whenever requested by other professionals, without ever compromising the items of this code of ethics.

### 3 - Duties to the Environment

- ▶ **Limit unnecessary radiation exposure ;**
- ▶ Protect the environment by ensuring the correct treatment of hospital waste and judicious use of technology and consumables (CDs, Films, PPE...);
- ▶ Ensure a safe environment and minimize exposure to potential risks (exposure to radiation, electromagnetic fields, acoustic noise, risk of infection)
- ▶ Switch off equipment (if possible!) whenever they are not in use, to save energy;

### 4- Duties to Yourself

- ▶ **Defend the profession and maintain a professional attitude** at all times;
- ▶ Maintain a culture of **continuous development and updated** on the profession state of the art of at all times;
- ▶ Aspire to a high level of professional efficiency at all times and act in accordance with the scientifically consulted and produced evidence;
- ▶ Maintaining and improving personal well-being and **never taking responsibility when under the influence of substances;**
- ▶ Be responsible for professional actions and decisions, **including mistakes;**
- ▶ Make sure all oral and written statements are true, clear and concise;
- ▶ **Maintain activity free from conflicts of interest;**
- ▶ Make use of appropriate professional, institutional or regulatory mechanisms to intervene when you witness an abuse or unsafe, incompetent or unethical practice;
- ▶ The **confidentiality and informed consent** should be evident to all involved;
- ▶ Act in accordance with the law regarding the license to practice the profession;
- ▶ Maintain high standards of personal conduct, giving importance to maintaining the confidence of patients and the public in the exercise of the profession.
- ▶ **Keep records up to date, accurate and secure** and ensure they are completed with honesty and integrity.
- ▶ **Limit work if it is affecting the professional's physical, emotional and psychological health;**
- ▶ You must not engage in any activity that you believe to be unsafe, illegal, unethical or harmful to patients;

- ▶ **Ensure that your professional attitude inspires confidence in patients** , reduces the risk of cross-infection and maintains the health and safety of everyone involved;
- ▶ Work within current legal, ethical, professional and governance standards regarding to their occupational role and the sector in which they work;
- ▶ **You should only delegate care or treatment to another person if you are convinced that he or she is competent in the job to be performed. Remember that, even delegating functions, we continue to be responsible for providing health care to the patient during the examination/treatment;**
- ▶ **Contribute to the training and education of students, interns, assistants and other members of the professional workforce ;**

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Board Chairman:

Subjected to review by leading international entities such as the **SOCIETY OF RADIOGRAPHERS AND THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF RADIOGRAPHERS AND RADIOLOGICAL TECHNOLOGISTS**

Collected opinions from colleagues and associates in a public consultation from August 9th, 2021 to August 24th, 2021

Approved unanimously at the General Meeting on: December 2, 2021

## References:

Professional Code of Conduct – SOR, available at: <https://www.sor.org/getmedia/dd242043-8c3a-449a-8f47-cc532e6d34f6/Code-of-Professional-Conduct>

Deontological Guidelines – International Society of Radiographers and Radiological Technologists, available at: <https://www.isrtr.org/code-ethics>

American Society of Radiological Technologists: Code of Ethics, available at [https://assets-us-01.kc-usercontent.com/406ac8c6-58e8-00b3-e3c1-0c312965deb2/2962cf53-d3b6-45e3-be28-0d2ae1d455d0/Code% 20of%20Ethics.pdf](https://assets-us-01.kc-usercontent.com/406ac8c6-58e8-00b3-e3c1-0c312965deb2/2962cf53-d3b6-45e3-be28-0d2ae1d455d0/Code%20of%20Ethics.pdf)

ESCO Portal – A taxonomy of European qualifications, competences and professions available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/esco/portal/occupation>

Concepts of ethics and morals: <https://conceito.de/moral> and <https://conceito.de/ethics>

Reference professionals consulted in Portugal