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Ethical dilemma in surgical pathology**Rateesh Sareen**

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There can be situations where a pathologist opinion could swing the pendulum in the interest of surgeon, justifying this fellow professional's actions or can be an evidence for negligence by surgeon taking in to account patient's interest. As a Pathologist whether one should be professional centeric or patient centric-it's a dilemme indeed. We need to differentiate between ethics and laws and understand the limitations in our medical curriculum pertaining to medical ethics. Ethics are philosophical study of the moral values of human conduct and rules that govern it. Ethics associated with specific groups of professionals having societal responsibilities and therefore places them in position of power, prestige and trust. Medical ethics acts as a bridge between theoretical bioethics and bedside practices which are aimed at improvement in the quality of patient care. They encompass legal and ethical considerations which are inherent inseparable sides of the same coin. Ethics are based on principles of autonomy, beneficence, non maleficence, justice and truth telling. Ethics need to be differentiated from laws although both regulate conduct of individuals in the society. Ethics are neither framed nor enforced like laws. They originate from inner consciousness and condemn evil intentions unlike laws that control external human conduct where inner motives have secondary role (except mens rhea in criminal law). Ethics are not backed with sanctions and there are no enforceable authorities whereas state is entrusted with the responsibility for enforcement of laws. The onus is on the law makers to enact and amend outdated laws to fill the gap between medical ethics and law and formulate guidelines complaint with ethical principles of medicine, taking care of patient autonomy in the ever evolving consumer centric health care system of 21st century.