

**From:** moses chu  
**To:** [medboardconsultation](#)  
**Subject:** Submission on code of conduct- good medicine practice  
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On page 7 paragraph 4 we find the following paragraph that should raise the alarm for anyone actually values good medical practice. In the section on ‘professionalism’ it says:

Please

Why is this so dangerous?

While this paragraph may seem innocuous and even in same way good, it is in reality very dangerous. This is because it threatens the fundamental freedom of medical professionals to speak and act according to their conscience. Given the important role doctors play in society, if it affects doctors, it has the potential to affect all of us.

Looking at the problem in more detail, it is a threat to freedom in the following ways: Freedom of Speech. It basically puts limits on what doctors say in public or online. If the doctor provides evidence for their view and says nothing illegal or defamatory, why do they need to even mention the profession’s position? It is in reality a thinly disguised attempt to muzzle doctors who hold views that are different from the majority from openly expressing those views.

Freedom of practice. If a doctor practices medicine that is deemed ‘unconventional’ by the majority but gets good results, this code could stop that doctor from promoting their practice. It is vague, ambiguous and does not specify how and why a doctor who holds views different from the profession and expresses them in public is a threat to the profession. It doesn’t specify what will be deemed unprofessional and who will determine what is unprofessional

Freedom of research. Many breakthroughs in medicine came about because someone challenged the ‘herd mentality’ of the majority. This code could actually harm the progress of the progression

Freedom to campaign. Those campaigning against issues such as euthanasia, abortion and same sex marriage often look to members of the medical profession who hold similar views to provide them with evidence supporting their position. If the majority of the profession support euthanasia however, then any doctor publicly opposing euthanasia, for example, may be found guilty of unprofessional conduct. This could rob non medical people who campaign on moral/cultural issues of their allies in the medical profession.

We wish the above reasoning is good enough for the code of conduct in good medicine. Please delete “Community trust in the medical profession is essential. Every doctor has a responsibility to behave ethically to justify this trust. The boundary between a doctor’s personal and public profile can be blurred. As a doctor, you need to acknowledge and consider the effect of your comments and actions outside work, including online, on your professional standing and on the reputation of the profession. If making public comment, you should acknowledge the profession’s generally accepted views and indicate when your personal opinion differs. Behaviour which could undermine community trust in the profession is at odds with good medical practice and may be considered unprofessional.”

Yours sincerely  
Moses CHU, physiotherapist

