

Leading with Integrity: Ethical Leadership in Pharmacy Practice

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Learning Objectives

For Pharmacists & Healthcare Executives:

- Recall key ethical principles and frameworks relevant to pharmacy practice and leadership.
- Identify ethical dilemmas and best practices for applying ethical reasoning in decision making for pharmacy practice and leadership.
- Recognize strategies to promote an ethical culture within pharmacy teams to enhance communication and collaboration.

Learning Objectives

For Pharmacy Technicians:

- Recall fundamental ethical principles that guide pharmacy practice and the roles of pharmacy technicians.
- Identify common ethical dilemmas encountered in pharmacy settings and strategies for addressing.
- Recognize practices that support ethical decision-making in daily pharmacy operations.

Ethical Leadership

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What is Ethical Leadership?

- Ethical leadership involves guiding individuals or teams in a manner that respects ethical principles, upholds integrity, and promotes trust within an organization
- In the context of pharmacy, it refers to the ability to make informed and strategic decisions that prioritize:



Patient Welfare: Placing the health, safety, and well-being of patients at the forefront by ensuring accurate medication use, personalized care, and proactive risk management



Professional Standards: Adhering to the highest levels of competency, ethical conduct, and evidence-based practices to maintain trust and credibility within the profession



Legal Obligations: Complying fully with regulatory frameworks, laws, and policies to safeguard patient rights, ensure accountability, and uphold the integrity of pharmacy practice

Principles of Ethical Leadership

Respect

Treating all individuals with dignity and honoring their rights

Accountability

Taking responsibility for one's actions and decisions

Service

Prioritizing the well-being of others, especially patients

Honesty

Demonstrating truthfulness and transparency in all actions

Justice

Ensuring fairness and equity in decision-making and actions

Community

Building strong, supportive relationships with colleagues, patients, and society

Why is Ethical Leadership Crucial in Pharmacy?

Patient Safety & Well-being

- Committing to the highest standards of care and ensuring the ethical dispensing of medications, prioritizing patient safety and well-being through accurate counseling and vigilant monitoring

Trust in Healthcare System

- Pharmacy professionals serve as trusted, accessible healthcare providers, fostering strong patient relationships and empowering individuals with knowledge to make informed decisions about their health

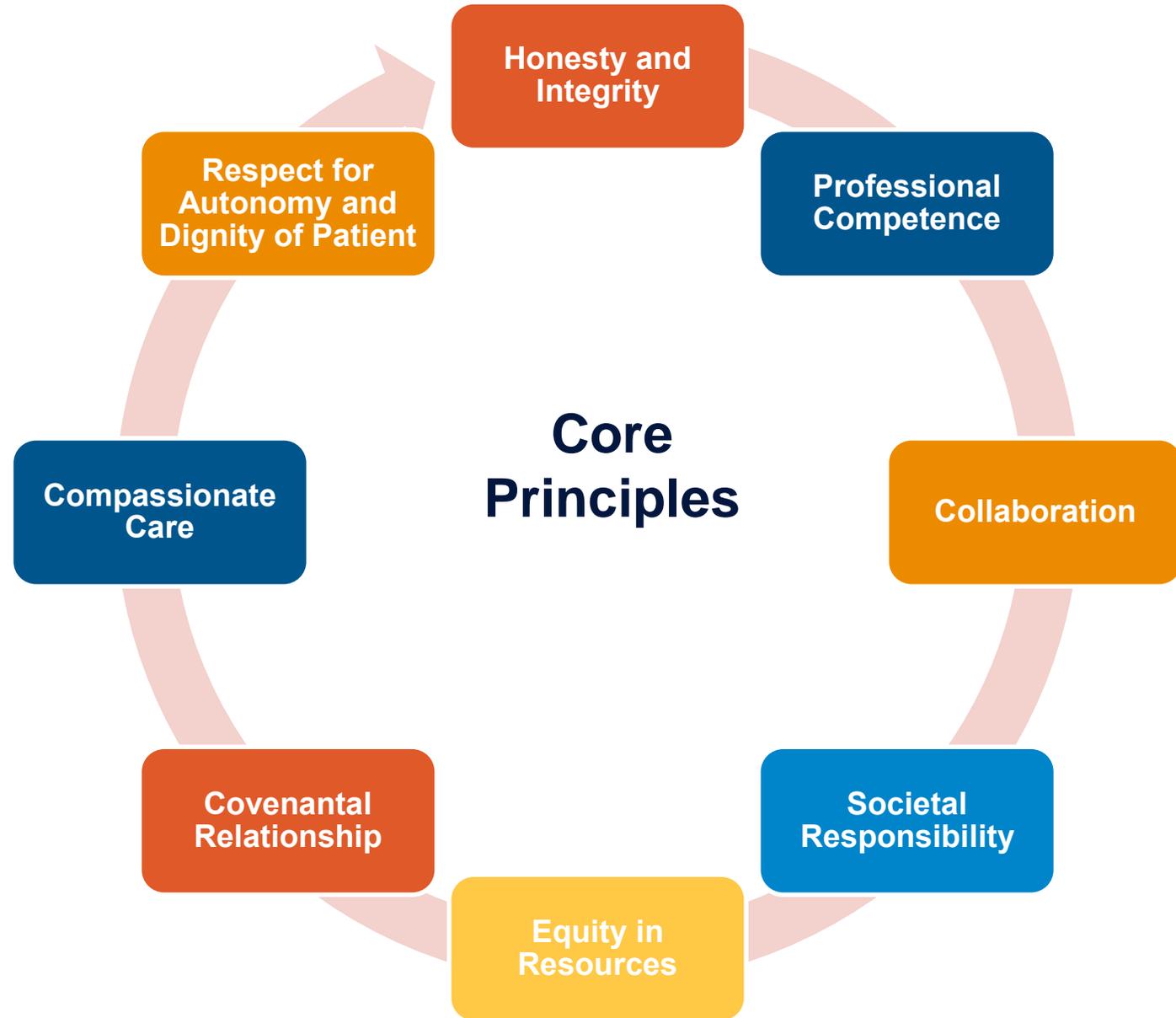
Legal & Professional Accountability

- Upholding the pharmacy code of ethics, strict adherence to legal and regulatory guidelines, and maintaining professional integrity to ensure responsible, transparent, and accountable healthcare practices

Workplace Morale & Team Building

- Ethical leadership cultivates a positive, inclusive work environment, promoting respect, collaboration, and a shared commitment to patient care, ultimately enhancing team performance and satisfaction

ASHP Code of Ethics for Pharmacists





Knowledge Check #1:

Which of the following is NOT a principle of ethical leadership?

(Select all that apply)

- A. Integrity and honesty
- B. Accountability and transparency
- C. Pursuing personal gain at the expense of others
- D. Respect for others and fairness
- E. Empowering others to succeed
- F. Encouraging ethical decision-making
- G. Ignoring the well-being of the team



Knowledge Check #1: Correct Response

Which of the following is NOT a principle of ethical leadership?

(Select all that apply)

- A. Integrity and honesty
- B. Accountability and transparency
- C. **Pursuing personal gain at the expense of others**
- D. Respect for others and fairness
- E. Empowering others to succeed
- F. Encouraging ethical decision-making
- G. **Ignoring the well-being of the team**



Knowledge Check #2

While pharmacist and pharmacy technician leaders are both responsible for upholding ethical principles in their practice, only pharmacists are required to make complex ethical decisions regarding patient care, while pharmacy technician leaders focus solely on administrative and operational tasks.

- True
- False



Knowledge Check #2: Correct Response

While pharmacist and pharmacy technician leaders are both responsible for upholding ethical principles in their practice, only pharmacists are required to make complex ethical decisions regarding patient care, while pharmacy technician leaders focus solely on administrative and operational tasks.

- True
- **False**

Ethical Leadership Scenario

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Ethical Dilemma



Pharmacist Emma works at Medix Pharmacy, a chain balancing patient care with strict sales targets. Her team is pressured to boost sales of SlimMax, a high-margin OTC weight loss supplement with questionable effectiveness and potential side effects like dizziness and nausea. While not explicitly harmful, SlimMax has a controversial reputation among health professionals. Emma faces an ethical dilemma as her sales team pushes SlimMax to patients inappropriately, including those who haven't expressed interest in weight loss. With the pharmacy offering bonuses for SlimMax sales, Emma, in her leadership role, must choose between confronting her team, risking alienation, or allowing practices that may compromise ethical patient care.

Ethical Dilemma Key Points



Emma is a pharmacist balancing patient care with sales targets

The pharmacy team is being asked to push sales of SlimMax, a new weight loss drug with questionable efficacy and significant side effects

Bonuses are being offered for SlimMax sales

Emma must choose between confronting her team or allowing unethical sales practices

Ethical Dilemma Options



- A. Encourage the sales approach
- B. Prioritize ethical patient care
- C. Speak to upper management and adjust sales targets
- D. Disregard the ethical concerns and focus on sales



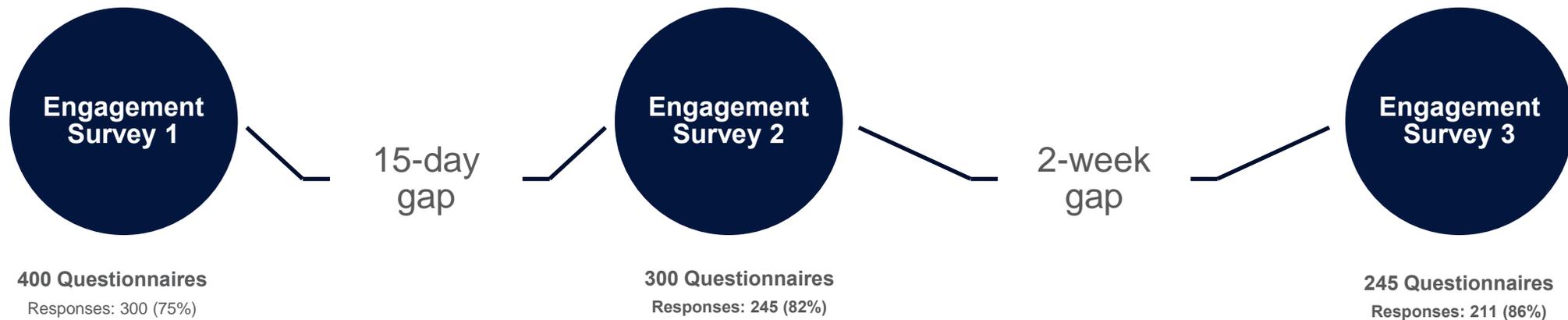
Article

Impact of Ethical Leadership on Employee Engagement: Role of Self-Efficacy and Organizational Commitment

Fouzia Ashfaq ^{1,*}, Ghulam Abid ²  and Sehrish Ilyas ¹

Study Design

- Ashfaq et al. investigate the impact of ethical leadership on employee engagement, highlighting the critical mediating roles of self-efficacy and organizational commitment
- A quantitative, empirical study utilizing self-administered questionnaires
 - Three-wave, time lagged design



Study Design

Ethical Leadership

- **10-item scale**
 - Example: "My supervisor defines success not just by results but also by the way that they are obtained."

Self-Efficacy

- **8-item scale**
 - Example: "When facing difficult tasks, I am certain that I will accomplish them."

Organizational Commitment

- **6-item scale**
 - Example: "I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization."

Employee Engagement

- **17-item scale**
 - Example: "At my work, I feel bursting with energy."

Results

- **Key Findings:**

- **Ethical Leadership and Engagement:** Ethical leadership fosters trust and fairness, positively influencing employee engagement
- **Self-Efficacy as a Mediator:** Ethical leadership boosts employees' belief in their abilities, enhancing self-confidence and engagement
- **Organizational Commitment:** Ethical leadership promotes a supportive environment, strengthening employee commitment and engagement
- **Interrelationships:** Self-efficacy and organizational commitment mediate the link between ethical leadership and engagement. Employees who view leaders as ethical are more confident, committed, and engaged

Applying the Principles to the Dilemma

Respect

Accountability

Service

Honesty

Justice

Community

Option A – Encourage the Sales Approach

- **Respect:** Encouraging aggressive sales of SlimMax undermines respect for patients' autonomy; as it pressures them into purchasing something they may not need
- **Accountability:** Emma would fail to hold her team accountable for unethical practices, compromising both her leadership and the pharmacy's reputation
- **Service:** The focus on sales targets compromises patient care, as the priority shifts from serving patients' needs to meeting financial goals
- **Honesty:** Allowing misleading sales tactics undermines honesty by encouraging the team to misrepresent the product to patients
- **Justice:** The practice of pushing SlimMax creates an unjust environment, where patients are unfairly targeted and exploited for profit
- **Community:** Encouraging unethical sales practices damages the pharmacy's reputation within the community, eroding trust and loyalty

Option B – Prioritize Ethical Patient Care

- **Respect:** Prioritizing patient care respects patients' right to make informed decisions about their health without being influenced by profit-driven motives
- **Accountability:** Emma demonstrates accountability by ensuring her team acts in the best interest of patients, holding them responsible for ethical behavior
- **Service:** This option focuses on providing high-quality care that meets patient needs rather than pushing products that may not be necessary
- **Honesty:** By recommending SlimMax only when appropriate, Emma maintains honesty, providing patients with accurate and transparent information
- **Justice:** Prioritizing ethical patient care ensures fairness, as all patients are treated based on their needs rather than sales-driven pressure
- **Community:** This approach strengthens the pharmacy's relationship with the community, building trust and long-term loyalty by showing commitment to patient well-being

Option C – Speak with Upper Management & Adjust Sales Targets

- **Respect:** Addressing the issue with upper management shows respect for both the ethical concerns of employees and the need to maintain patient care
- **Accountability:** Emma holds herself and management accountable for creating an environment that aligns sales targets with ethical standards
- **Service:** By advocating for patient-centered sales metrics, Emma ensures that patient care remains the primary focus of the pharmacy's service model
- **Honesty:** Raising concerns with management allows for an honest dialogue about the conflict between sales goals and ethical patient care
- **Justice:** Adjusting sales targets ensures fairness by preventing unethical sales practices and ensuring that all patients are treated equitably
- **Community:** Emma's advocacy strengthens the pharmacy's standing in the community by showing it values ethical practices and patient welfare over profit

Option D – Disregard the Ethical Concerns & Focus on Sales

- **Respect:** Ignoring ethical concerns shows a lack of respect for patients' autonomy, as it prioritizes profit over their well-being
- **Accountability:** Emma fails to be accountable for her team's unethical behavior, allowing sales pressure to override patient care and ethical standards
- **Service:** The focus on sales targets undermines the quality of service, as patients may be encouraged to purchase products they don't need
- **Honesty:** This approach sacrifices honesty, as the pharmacy misrepresents SlimMax to patients and encourages them to buy a potentially unnecessary product
- **Justice:** Disregarding ethical concerns results in injustice, as patients are unfairly pushed into purchasing a product they may not need, based on sales goals
- **Community:** The decision would harm the pharmacy's relationship with the community by fostering distrust and eroding patient confidence in the pharmacy's integrity



Knowledge Check #3

Which of the following are the best choices for Emma going forward?

(Select all that apply)

- Option A – Encourage the sales approach
- Option B – Prioritize ethical patient care
- Option C – Speak to upper management and adjust sales targets
- Option D – Disregard the ethical concerns and focus on sales



Knowledge Check #3: Correct Response

Which of the following are the best choices for Emma going forward?

(Select all that apply)

- Option A – Encourage the sales approach
- **Option B – Prioritize ethical patient care**
- **Option C – Speak to upper management and adjust sales targets**
- Option D – Disregard the ethical concerns and focus on sales



Knowledge Check #4

What is the most appropriate strategy for addressing this ethical dilemma from the standpoint of other employees other than Emma?

- Option A – Prioritize meeting sales targets
- Option B – Follow the teams lead and push SlimMax
- Option C – Balance the pressure of sales targets with commitment to ethical patient care
- Option D – Focus only on administrative tasks and avoid getting involved



Knowledge Check #4: Correct Response

What is the most appropriate strategy for addressing this ethical dilemma from the standpoint of other employees other than Emma?

- Option A – Prioritize meeting sales targets
- Option B – Follow the teams lead and push SlimMax
- **Option C – Balance the pressure of sales targets with commitment to ethical patient care**
- Option D – Focus only on administrative tasks and avoid getting involved

Take Away Points

- Key Point:
 - Ethical leadership is crucial for establishing a culture of trust and accountability. As a pharmacy leader, your decisions and actions set the tone for the entire team
- Actions:
 - Inspire ethical behavior through example
 - Foster a culture of trust, respect, and inclusivity
 - Balance individual care with societal responsibilities

Conflicts of Interest

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What is a Conflict of Interest?



A conflict between the private interests and the official responsibilities of a person in a position of trust

Conflict of Interest Dilemma



Pharmacist John is responsible for purchasing medications for the hospital's pharmacy. He has been approached by a sales representative from a drug company that provides an expensive brand-name drug. John has received gifts, including tickets to sporting events, from the sales rep over the past few months. The hospital is considering whether to switch to this brand-name drug, which is significantly more expensive than the generic alternative. Despite research showing the generic drug is equally effective, John is tempted to recommend the brand-name drug due to the gifts he has received, as well as his positive relationship with the sales representative.



Conflict of Interest Dilemma Key Points

John is a pharmacist responsible for purchasing medications for the hospital pharmacy

John has recently received gifts, including tickets to sporting events, from a sales representative from a company that provides an expensive brand-name drug

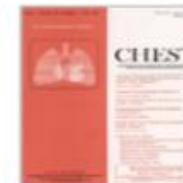
The hospital is considering whether to switch to this brand-name drug, which is significantly more expensive than the generic alternative

Despite research showing the generic drug is equally effective, John is tempted to recommend the brand-name drug due to the gifts he has received, as well as his positive relationship with the sales representative



Conflict of Interest Dilemma Options

- A. Prioritize the hospital's best interest and recommend the generic drug
- B. Recommend the brand-name drug to maintain the relationship with the sales representative
- C. Recuse himself from the decision-making process
- D. Consult the hospital's ethics committee for guidance



The Effects of Pharmaceutical Firm Enticements on Physician Prescribing Patterns: There's No Such Thing as a Free Lunch

James P. Orlowski M.D., F.C.C.P. * , Leon Wateska R.Ph., M.S. *

Study Design

- This 1992 study tracked how much of two drugs (A and B) were used in the hospital before and after 20 physicians attended free, company-sponsored trips promoting those drugs
- They also asked the doctors if the trips influenced their prescribing and compared the results to national trends and alternative drugs

Results

- After the trips, hospital use of both drugs increased significantly, much more than national trends, even though most doctors said the trips didn't influence them
- Drug A: National usage in large hospitals and major medical centers increased only 3.5-fold over two years, compared to a 10-fold increase at the study institution
- Drug B: National usage increased 2.5- to 3.5-fold, while the study institution saw a 4.5-fold increase

Applying the Principles to the Dilemma

Respect

Accountability

Service

Honesty

Justice

Community

Option 1: Prioritize the Hospital's Best Interest & Recommend the Generic Drug

- **Respect:** Treats patients and the hospital with dignity by honoring their right to affordable, effective care
- **Accountability:** Demonstrates responsibility by basing the decision on evidence and cost-effectiveness while disclosing the conflict of interest
- **Service:** Prioritizes the well-being of patients and the hospital's financial sustainability over personal gain
- **Honesty:** Shows transparency by openly communicating about the gifts and relying on research to justify the recommendation
- **Justice:** Ensures fairness by choosing the most equitable option for patients, avoiding unnecessary financial strain
- **Community:** Strengthens trust within the hospital community by prioritizing integrity and fairness in decision-making

Option 2: Recommend Brand-name Drug to Maintain Relationship with Sales Representative

- **Respect:** Risks undermining respect for the hospital and its patients by prioritizing the sales representative over their needs
- **Accountability:** Fails to take responsibility for the conflict of interest, potentially damaging trust and credibility
- **Service:** Neglects the well-being of patients and the hospital by recommending a costlier option without added benefit
- **Honesty:** Lacks transparency, as the decision is influenced by personal gain rather than evidence or patient care
- **Justice:** Violates fairness by imposing an unnecessary financial burden on the hospital and patients
- **Community:** Erodes trust within the hospital community and could damage relationships with colleagues who expect ethical leadership

Option 3: Recuse Himself From the Decision-making Process

- **Respect:** Acknowledges the potential conflict and treats colleagues and patients with dignity by ensuring impartiality
- **Accountability:** Takes responsibility by admitting the conflict of interest and stepping aside to prevent biased decision-making
- **Service:** Serves patients and the hospital by allowing an unbiased party to make the most evidence-based decision
- **Honesty:** Displays transparency by disclosing the situation and openly addressing the ethical dilemma
- **Justice:** Maintains fairness by ensuring the decision is based solely on evidence and patient care needs
- **Community:** Strengthens relationships within the hospital by demonstrating humility and a commitment to ethical standards

Option 4: Consult the Hospital's Ethics Committee for Guidance

- **Respect:** Shows respect for the hospital's policies and for colleagues by involving an impartial group to resolve the dilemma
- **Accountability:** Takes responsibility by seeking input to ensure the decision is ethical and evidence-based
- **Service:** Prioritizes patient and hospital well-being by allowing an ethics committee to guide the decision
- **Honesty:** Demonstrates transparency by presenting the conflict of interest and asking for guidance
- **Justice:** Ensures fairness by involving multiple perspectives to reach an equitable solution
- **Community:** Builds a sense of trust and collaboration by working with the ethics committee to uphold ethical standards



Knowledge Check #5

Which of the following are the best choices for John going forward?

(Select all that apply)

- Option A - Prioritize the hospital's best interest and recommend the generic drug
- Option B - Recommend the brand-name drug to maintain the relationship with the sales representative
- Option C - Recuse himself from the decision-making process
- Option D - Consult the hospital's ethics committee for guidance



Knowledge Check #5: Correct Response

Which of the following are the best choices for John going forward?

(Select all that apply)

- Option A - Prioritize the hospital's best interest and recommend the generic drug
- Option B - Recommend the brand-name drug to maintain the relationship with the sales representative
- **Option C - Recuse himself from the decision-making process**
- **Option D - Consult the hospital's ethics committee for guidance**



Knowledge Check #6

Disclosing a conflict of interest eliminates the potential for bias in decision-making.

- True
- False



Knowledge Check #6: Correct Response

Disclosing a conflict of interest eliminates the potential for bias in decision-making.

- True
- **False**

Identifying & Managing Conflicts of Interest

- Key Point:
 - Conflicts of interest can undermine trust and compromise the integrity of clinical decisions. Leaders must actively manage these conflicts to maintain ethical standards in pharmacy practice
- Actions:
 - Establish clear policies to disclose and manage conflicts of interest
 - Avoid situations where personal relationships or financial interests can influence clinical decisions
 - Encourage staff to report conflicts of interest without fear of retaliation

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Thank you!

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