



Suggested answers to “spot the ethical issue” situations (*PJ*, 13 Oct, pp411–414)

All of the scenarios require the pharmacist to give attention to respecting the patient’s right to give or withhold consent to, and be involved in, their treatment and care. In particular, principle 3 (statement 3.6) and the whole of principle 4 of the code of ethics, supplemented by the standards and guidance on consent, apply to the scenarios.

Situation	Possible issues	Relevant parts of the 2007 code
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Patients should consent (or not) to being the subject of supplementary prescribing arrangements. (This is also a legal requirement.) 	Principle 3 (especially 3.6) and principle 4 (especially 4.1 and 4.5)
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This policy is unacceptably paternalistic. Parents and guardians should know about and agree, or not, to the use of unlicensed medicines for their children. Failure to tell the truth can undermine trust in health professionals and suggest a negligent standard of care. 	Statement 3.6 and principle 4 (especially 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3)
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Patients and pharmacy users should be in control of their personal data and consent to each use and disclosure at the time of collection. Unacceptable practices should be challenged. 	Statements 3.6, 3.7 and 4.5
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Patients in care should be treated as individuals and have the right to consent, or not, to aspects of their care. Adjustments to care arrangements should be made in the interests of patients not staff. 	Principle 3 (especially 3.6) and principle 4
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A medicines use review should not be started until the patient has consented both to the review and any consequent access to their medical records. A standard operating procedure should address these matters. An opportunity arises here to seek reasons for this patient’s concerns and to clarify the purpose and scope of an MUR. 	Principle 3 (especially 3.6), principle 4 and the standards and guidance on consent
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any agreement should respect the interests of both the supplying pharmacist and the substance misuser. Clear expectations on both parties should be set out and discussed where necessary. 	Principle 3 (especially 3.6), principle 4 and the standards and guidance on consent