

50th Anniversary of Declaration of Helsinki
11 November 2014
Pörssi Talo, Helsinki, Finland

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The Declaration of Helsinki (DoH) translates the willingness of the World Medical Association and its Founding President, Eugène Marquis, French Physician, to bring the ethics of medical practice and research at the highest level with a twofold goal :

- to ensure a universality of ethics in research on human beings as well as the protection of people subjected to these researches.
- to make definitely impossible the horrible abuse of medicine encountered during the thirties and forties.

These ethical principles are often translated into the codes of ethics of each country or laid down in the resolutions of international organisations which are usual partners of the World Medical Association (WHO, UNESCO, UNITED NATIONS, ICRC.)

And governments felt encouraged to include the DoH principles into their legislation.

This Declaration combines pragmatism and wisdom to the 'primacy of the individual'. This raises awareness of the physician to the fundamental importance of informed consent and information of the patient, the secrecy of personal and especially patient data, and the value of the professional autonomy of the physician. Under the aegis of independent research committees, the DoH rigorously codifies the scientific studies and trials, and in particular, the protection of the research subjects against dangerous experiments and exploitation. The declaration commands the application of the necessary scientific rigor, including the usage of placebos when necessary.

The sustainability of the DoH is a shining example of universality of medical ethics. Even if its drafting seemed to be laborious, our Declaration of Helsinki has the merit to be a historical and yet modern document, compiling the cultures of more than 100 medical associations. Thus, it is an authentic factor of peace and union between medical professions around the world in full respect for the patients for whom we care.

The DoH ensures a rigorous application of science as well as the ethics on the grounds of a genuine respect for the patient and human rights we are caring for.

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