

**HEALTH PROFESSIONS COUNCIL OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**MEDICAL AND DENTAL PROFESSIONS BOARD**

**RULE 21 OF THE GENERIC ETHICAL AND PROFESSIONAL RULES OF THE HEALTH PROFESSIONS COUNCIL OF SOUTH AFRICA AS PROMULGATED IN GOVERNMENT GAZETTE R717/2006**

**PERFORMANCE OF PROFESSIONAL ACTS**

A practitioner shall perform, except in an emergency, only a professional act-

- a. for which he or she is adequately educated, trained and sufficiently experienced; and
- b. under proper conditions and in appropriate surroundings.

**INTERPRETATION OF RULE 21**

**i. Emergency intervention**

In an emergency, where there was a direct threat to life or limb and there is no immediate access to a more appropriately trained healthcare worker, then the healthcare worker should intervene to the best of his/her ability.

**ii. Appropriately educated and credentialed**

To qualify as appropriately credentialed, the individual practitioner must have successfully completed a training programme approved and accredited by the Board for registration purposes:

- aa. The training entity/institution/hospital needed to be accredited for training in that particular profession or discipline and for that particular competency (in this case, by the Board).
- bb. The trainee needed to be evaluated and certified as having met the requirements of the training programme by an entity accredited by the Board (e.g. Colleges of Medicine, Universities).
- cc. The duration of under- and postgraduate training was laid down by the Board.
- dd. Short courses would only be recognised as enhancing or maintaining skills within the field of practice and category of registration in which the practitioner had already been credentialed and registered by the Board.
- ee. The actual scope of the profession was laid down by the Board judged by the standards and norms considered reasonable for the circumstances under which the intervention took place.

**iii. Sufficiently experienced**

- aa. Initial training period under the supervision as defined in clause (b) above, under the supervision of an entity accredited by the Board for such purposes.
- bb. Certification of successful completion of such training, as defined.
- cc. With any intervention a minimum number of interventions needs to be performed annually to remain proficient, taking into account and judged by the standards and norms considered reasonable for the circumstances under which the intervention took place
- dd. The introduction of new interventions within the practitioners' scope of profession was only permissible if the practitioner had undergone further appropriate training as approved by the Board.

**iv. Under proper conditions and surroundings**

All interventions shall take place under appropriate conditions and surroundings. These are subject to judgement by the Board as to what is considered reasonable for the circumstances and conditions, under which the intervention took place. No practitioner must embark upon an intervention unless he/she feels that it is in the patient's interest, and that it would be considered safe to do so, under the prevailing conditions and surroundings. The practitioner would be judged on what requirements would be reasonable to ensure that patient safety was protected.

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