



## DEFINITION

Engineering ethics combines inquires into values ,meanings and facts. In order to find answer to many moral dilemmas, It is necessary to understand the types of inquiry



There are three types of inquiry, They are

- \*Normative inquiries
- \*Conceptual inquiries
- \*Factual inquiries



## Normative inquiries

Normative inquiries are useful to identify the values that guide the individuals and group in taking a decision.

Generally Normative inquiries or questions are about what ought to be ? What is good?

Example:

\*When and why the engineers have obligations to their employees ,their clients and the general public?



## Normative inquiries

- Why some engineering information should kept confidential
- How an engineer can protect the public safety in a given situation?
  - From the above question, it is clear that the goal of normative inquiries is justifying many moral judgements.



## Conceptual inquiries

- These inquiries are useful in classifying the meaning of concepts, principles, and issues in engineering ethics.
- In other words, the aim of conceptual inquiries is to clarify the meaning of key ideas and issues, possibly expressed by single words or statements.



## Factual inquiries

- Factual inquiries are also known as descriptive or exploratory inquiries.
  - These inquiries are helpful to provide facts required for understanding and resolving value issues.

# Factual inquiries

- Researches and engineers are these inquiries to get various information such as the history of engineering profession, the effectiveness of professional societies in promoting moral conduct, the procedures used in risk –benefit analysis and psychological profiles of engineers.
  - The above obtained information through the factual inquiries provides an understanding of the background conditions that generate the moral problems.



- Also these factual inquiries are helpful in understanding the business, social and political realities in which the company operates.





## Example:

- (1) What are the laws enforced in the intellectual property rights law recently.
- (2) What are the procedures used in making risk assessment?
- (3) What is the validity period of a patented product?



# Case Study: Ethical Dilemma in a Healthcare Setting



## Background:

Dr. Sarah Johnson is a renowned cardiologist working in a large urban hospital. She has recently joined a new hospital with an excellent reputation for patient care. During her first few months, Dr. Johnson encounters an ethical dilemma related to the hospital's policies and practices.



## Situation:

Dr. Johnson notices that several patients, particularly those with lower incomes, are being recommended more expensive treatment options than necessary. Upon further investigation, she discovers that the hospital's administration has a financial incentive to promote high-cost treatments due to partnerships with medical device companies and pharmaceutical firms. Dr. Johnson is concerned that this practice might not be in the best interest of the patients and may lead to unnecessary financial burden on them.



## Types of Inquiry in Professional Ethics:

### Descriptive Inquiry:

#### Focus:

Understanding the facts and details of the situation.

#### Application:

Dr. Johnson begins by gathering information about the hospital's treatment recommendations and the financial arrangements with medical companies. She reviews patient records, treatment plans, and the hospital financial incentives. Descriptive inquiry helps her understand the full scope of the issue and the practices in place.



# Types of Inquiry in Professional Ethics:

## Normative Inquiry:

### Focus:

Evaluating the ethical standards and principles that should guide behavior.

### Application:

Dr. Johnson examines the ethical principles involved, such as patient autonomy, beneficence (acting in the best interest of the patient), and justice (fairness). She assesses whether the hospital's practices align with these ethical standards. Normative inquiry involves questioning if the hospital's financial incentives compromise the quality of patient care and if these practices are justifiable.



# Types of Inquiry in Professional Ethics:

## Prescriptive Inquiry:

### Focus:

Recommending actions or solutions based on ethical principles.

### Application:

Based on her findings, Dr. Johnson proposes several actions to address the issue. She suggests implementing a more transparent decision-making process, revising treatment protocols to ensure they are based solely on medical necessity, and advocating for an independent review of the hospital's financial arrangements. Prescriptive inquiry aims to provide actionable solutions to resolve the dilemma.



# Types of Inquiry in Professional Ethics:

## Applied Inquiry:

### Focus:

Applying ethical theories and principles to practical scenarios.

### Application:

Dr. Johnson uses ethical theories such as deontology (duty-based ethics) and consequentialism (outcome-based ethics) to analyze the situation. She considers whether the duty to act in the patient's best interest overrides the financial benefits to the hospital and evaluates the potential consequences of both continuing and changing the current practices. Applied inquiry helps her frame her recommendations in the context of real-world implications.





# Types of Inquiry in Professional Ethics:

## Outcome:

Dr. Johnson presents her findings and recommendations to the hospital's ethics committee. Her report highlights the discrepancy between the hospital's financial interests and patient welfare. She advocates for the development of new policies that prioritize patient care over financial incentives. The committee decides to review the hospital's financial relationships and treatment protocols, with the aim of ensuring that patient care is not compromised by financial considerations.



# Types of Inquiry in Professional Ethics:

## Conclusion:

This case study illustrates how different types of inquiry in professional ethics—descriptive, normative, prescriptive, and applied—can be used to analyze and address ethical dilemmas in a healthcare setting. By employing these inquiries, Dr. Johnson effectively identifies, evaluates, and addresses the ethical issues at hand, ultimately contributing to improved ethical standards and patient care in her hospital.



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