



57. Who may be called professor?

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Background

In recent years the Ethics Board has been called upon to address the issue of the title "professor" (of medicine), or to be more precise, who is entitled to use this title in Israel. It should be noted that the degree of Doctor of Medicine is the professional title of every physician. It is intended to indicate that the holder of this title successfully completed medical studies, and that he is certified by the State to treat patients. A physician is entitled to add to his title the additional title of "specialist in..." if he completed recognized training in this field and met the requirements of the Scientific Council of the Israeli Medical Association and holds a certificate of specialization granted to him by the Ministry of Health.

The title "professor" (Prof.) is an academic degree given to a physician who teaches or conducts research in a university. This title has no connection with the treatment of patients.

Although we are certain that a person calling himself "professor" has in fact received this title honestly, in other countries the title "professor" is used in different situations and for various aims. This is liable to mislead the public, especially if the title "professor" is given for teaching for a specified period of time in a foreign university, or if the title "professor" held by the person is not in the field of medicine.

Over the years we have repeatedly encountered complaints from the public on this subject. The general public in Israel regards a person who holds the title of "professor" as a senior and very experienced physician, and frequently prefers him to an "ordinary" physician. One result of this view is that the title "professor" carries with it clear and unambiguous economic advancements. It is therefore easy to understand the feelings of the public that wishes to be certain that the "professor" who came to them is in fact a professor of medicine in accordance with the criteria customary in Israel.

Position paper

- The title "professor" may be borne by:
 1. A physician who has an active appointment and teaches in a faculty of medicine in one of the universities in Israel, and whose name appears on the list of professors of said faculty. (For this purpose, a person shall be regarded as a professor if he bears the title of associate professor or full professor in an academic or clinical track.)
 2. A physician who retired and who holds the title of professor may use this title permanently (Professor Emeritus).



3. A physician whose major occupation is in medicine in Israel may use the title "professor of medicine" conferred upon him abroad, only if the degree has been officially recognized by one of the faculties of medicine in Israel. In all other cases the physician may make use of this title only after he has attached to his name the title "Dr.", while indicating the title "professor" in a separate line, as well as the place and period of time in which he worked as a professor outside Israel (updated May 2009).
 4. A physician may make use of the title "professor" given to him in a profession other than medicine, only after he has attached to his name the title "Dr.", while indicating the title "professor" and the field in which the title of "professor" was given in a separate line, and in a way that will not mislead a reasonable person into thinking that the title "professor" was given in medicine (updated May 2009).
 5. A physician who bears the title "professor" and who is transferring between two universities in Israel, may use this title for three years from the date of the move.
- The Ethics Board has contacted the four deans of the faculties of medicine in Israel and has received from them the list of the professors of medicine serving in each of the faculties. This list shall guide the Ethics Board in this matter.