

Last changes March 23rd, 2020

Core Values and Principles of Nordic General Practice/Family Medicine

General Practice/Family Medicine is a fundamental element of primary care, defined by [WONCA Europe](#) as an established clinical discipline and by the [WHO](#) as the basis of all health care.

As an academic discipline, General Practice/Family Medicine is based on knowledge and methodology drawn from the Natural Sciences as well as the Humanities.

As committed leaders in the ongoing process of defining and implementing core values and principles, General Practitioners aim to:

- promote and protect the health and well-being of each individual patient while keeping in mind the needs of the general population;
- provide a frame of reference for our professional identity;
- provide a basis for continuing professional development, with curricula and training adapted to every educational level – undergraduate, post-graduate, and beyond;
- communicate our mandate and the principles of our work to patients, fellow healthcare workers, and our communities.

1. We promote continuity of doctor-patient relationships as a central organising principle.

The doctor-patient relationship is based on personal involvement and confidentiality. Continuity of care helps build mutual trust and enable high-quality, person-centred care.

2. We provide timely diagnosis and avoid unnecessary tests and overtreatment. Disease prevention and health promotion are integrated into our daily activities.

We care for our patients throughout their lives, tending to them through disease and suffering while encouraging progress toward health. We help patients understand their own health – to confront and manage their limitations, improve and maintain their well-being.

Overexamination, overdiagnosis, and overtreatment can harm patients, consume resources and indirectly lead to harmful underdiagnosis and undertreatment elsewhere. When equally effective interventions are available, we choose those that cost less.

3. We prioritise those whose needs for healthcare are greatest.

Our solemn pledge to our patients is to do whatever they actually need us to do. It is not realistically possible, however, to fulfil all the expectations placed on a GP. Therefore, we organise our practices to devote the most time and effort to those whose needs for treatment and support are greatest.

We work to minimise inequalities in how health services are provided.

4. We practice person-centred medicine, emphasising dialogue and context.

We engage professionally with our patients' current life situations, biographical stories, beliefs, worries, and hopes. This helps us to recognise the links between social factors and sickness, and to deepen our understanding of how life and life events leave their imprint on the human body. We promote patients' capacity to make use of their individual and communal resources.

To safeguard our long-term resilience as caregivers, we attend to our own well-being.

5. We remain committed to education, research, and professional development.

We take a constructively critical view of new knowledge and approaches within our areas of specialisation. We promote research that is suited to the knowledge needs of General Practice/Family Medicine. We engage actively in the training of our future colleagues.

6. We recognise that social strain, deprivation and traumatic experiences increase people's susceptibility to disease, and we speak out on relevant issues.

Respect for human dignity is a prerequisite for healing and recovery.

We acknowledge that many circumstances contribute to health inequalities: childhood experiences, housing, education, social support, family income/ unemployment, community structures, access to health services, etc.

We recognise our duty to speak out publicly on specific factors that cause or worsen disease, increase inequality in health outcomes, or make resources less accessible to certain people.

7. We collaborate across professions and disciplines while also taking care not to blur the lines of responsibility.

We actively promote cooperation with and among all relevant healthcare providers.