

Episode: *Author Interview: “AMA Code of Medical Ethics’ Opinions Related to Robotic Surgery”*

Guest: Jake Young, PhD, MPH, MFA

Host: Tim Hoff

Transcript by: Cheryl Green

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[bright theme music]

TIM HOFF: Welcome to another episode of the Author Interview series from the *American Medical Association Journal of Ethics*. I’m your host, Tim Hoff. This series provides an alternative way to access the interesting and important work being done by Journal contributors each month. Joining me on this episode is Dr Jake Young, a policy analyst at the American Medical Association in Chicago, Illinois. He’s here to discuss his article, “AMA Code of Medical Ethics’ Opinions Related to Robotic Surgery,” in the August 2023 issue of the Journal, [Robotic Surgery](#). Dr Young, thank you for being back on the podcast. [music fades]

DR JAKE YOUNG: Thanks so much for having me.

HOFF: So, what’s the main ethics point that you’re making in this article?

YOUNG: The main ethics point, I’d say, is that the use of any novel technology in medicine, whether that’s a new surgical device or the integration of generative AI into health care or something else we haven’t seen yet, requires sound research and monitoring to ensure that the new technology is being used to provide safe, efficient, and equitable care. But it also requires that health professionals have open and honest discussions with patients about what we know and what we don’t know yet about these technologies.

HOFF: And so, what do you think is the most important thing for health professions students and trainees to take from your article?

YOUNG: So, we know that the use of robotic-assisted surgical procedures are going to continue to increase. But this is a new technology, and so that means we need to continue conducting research to fill in the gaps of evidence regarding its safety and effectiveness. The challenge for those in the health professions then, is to make sure that they take good records so that we have high quality data. Health professionals also need to stay educated about best practices as this technology changes and becomes more prevalent. And crucially, they must be upfront with patients about what we do and don’t know yet about these technologies so that patients can make truly informed decisions regarding their course of treatment.

HOFF: And finally, if you could add a point to your article that you didn’t have the time or space to fully explore, what would that be?

YOUNG: I think I would highlight the fact that the AMA’s *Code of Ethics* doesn’t actually say anything specifically about robotic-assisted surgery. What the *Code of Ethics* does speak to is the patient-physician relationship, patient rights, standards of quality of care, ethically sound innovations in medicine, conflicts of interest, continuing medical education, all of which are relevant to robotic-assisted surgery, but which are also relevant to most new technologies more broadly. I think the really important thing to realize here then, is that the *Code of Ethics* is designed to help professionals navigate the ethical dilemmas they encounter in their practice.

[theme music returns] It's a tool and a resource that they can turn to if and when they have questions about what the right course of action should be, regardless of the scenario.

HOFF: Dr Young, thank you so much for being back on the podcast, and thanks again for your contribution to the Journal.

YOUNG: Thank you.

HOFF: To read the full article, as well as the rest of this month's issue for free, visit our site, journalofethics.org. We'll be back soon with more *Ethics Talk* from the *American Medical Association Journal of Ethics*.