

The patients were treated through a scheme starting with physiotherapy and diet; if this failed, drugs were used, and at last, surgery would be resorted to. The physiotherapy included exercises and water baths. Al Tabari, the chief physician in 970 A.D., described the Islamic code of ethics as follows (Hamamch 1971, Levy 1967):

- I. Personal characters of the physician: The Physician ought to be modest, virtuous, merciful, and unaddicted to liquor. Medical Ethics in Islam The medical profession was a well respected specialty and its leaders kept it this way by laying down proper ethics. The Arabs had an elaborate system of dieting and were aware of food deficiencies.
- II. His obligation towards patients: He should avoid predicting whether a patient will live or die, only God (Allah) knows. If the physician prescribes a drug orally, he should make sure that the patient understands the name correctly, in case he would ask for the wrong drug and get worse instead of better. Drugs were divided into two groups: simple and compound drugs. If these conservative measures failed, surgery was undertaken. He should wear clean clothes, be dignified, and have well-groomed hair and beard. They were aware of the interaction between drugs; thus, they used simple drugs first. He should select his company to be persons of good reputation.