

Letter to the Editor

Morality and ethics without religion

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Dear Sir,

A man's ethical behavior should be based effectually on sympathy, education, and social ties and needs; no religious basis is necessary. Man would indeed be in a poor way if he had to be restrained by fear of punishment and hope of reward after death.^[1]

Albert Einstein

Morality and ethics are exceedingly important aspects of neurosurgery and are the subject of a recent editorial in *Surgical Neurology International*.^[2] Patients and doctors should work together to ensure an ethical approach to the clinical neurosciences in general and to neurosurgery in particular.

The editorial in question repeatedly suggests that morals are derived from religious principles. This is a common misconception. Indeed, amoral and unethical behavior is often supported by religion; historical and contemporary examples are support for slavery and oppression of women and homosexuals. Moreover, numerous secular,

nonreligious individuals and organizations (such as Doctors Without Borders) display highly moral and ethical behavior without belief in a god/gods or religion. Personal religious bias has no role in scientific discourse, including the neurosurgical literature.

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2. Faria MA Jr. The road being paved to neuroethics: A path leading to bioethics or to neuroscience medical ethics? *Surg Neurol Int* 2014;5:146.

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