

The Development and Progress of Patients Rights

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1. Thinking globally

From the beginning to the year 1950. The point of departure is the principle which was defined fifty years ago in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights : "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for himself and his family, including ... medical care ... " (Article 25).

2. The categories and levels of international regulations :

- Law : In case the rights of the patients are stipulated by law.
- Part of the law: The patients` rights are often declared by the general Health Care Act.
- Separate laws: The specific medical interventions or medical research are covered by separate laws.
- Chartas: Incorporating the rights of the patients in a charta.

3. Since the 70s

Several international declarations have been made that cover the principles of patients' rights. Issued by

- World Health Organization: Declaration on the Promotion of Patients' Rights in Europe, adopted in Amsterdam, 1994
- Council of Europe : Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine, adopted in Oviedo, 1997
- World Medical Association : Geneva Declaration, Helsinki Declaration, Sydney Declaration etc.

4. Acting locally

1. The Hungarian patients` rights are discussed in 1997/CLIV. Hungarian Health Care Act. Antecedents : Hungarian Constitution in harmony with European Social Charta (1961). Survey of patients' most important rights, which are declared in the Hungarian Health Care Act.
2. Role of health and medical libraries regarding knowledge of patients' rights in Hungary:
 - Collection of documents and publications on patients' rights (books, journals, pamphlets, AV and digital documents etc.)
 - the organization of public information services on patients' rights (data bases, full text documents etc.)
 - the construction of separated patients` rights (patients' education) web pages, links to consumer health portals.