



THE ITALIAN GeFI CODE OF CONDUCT

ITALIAN SPEAKING GROUP OF THE



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ABSTRACT The *Ge.F.I.* board has set up a working group, made up of all the practitioners working in the field of forensic genetics, to develop the “Code of conduct of forensic geneticist”.

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INTRODUCTION

The forensic geneticist uses modern molecular biology techniques for personal identification and parental relationships. He operates as an expert for the Judicial Authority, in both civil and criminal proceedings, and even for private individuals at request.

However in Italy, forensic geneticists have no official recognition that should provide certain rights and responsibilities to them: practitioners from various fields such as legal medicine, biology, biotechnology, with adequate qualifications, dedicate themselves to this discipline. The only possible restraint upon professional misconduct of a forensic geneticist is through membership of a scientific society or association, which establishes membership rules. Therefore, there is a need to establish codes of conduct, which should be revised regularly from time to time to meet the growing scientific-technological advancement, the new laws and any changes of deontological codes.



MATERIAL AND METHODS

The code of conduct of the forensic geneticist developed by the *GeFI* group consists of **6 chapters** and **22 articles** describing general principles, relations with other forensic geneticists, duties of forensic geneticist in the court during a trial, informed consent, privacy, ect.

CHAPTER INDEX

I GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- Art. 1 - Forensic geneticist role
- Art. 2 - Aim of the code
- Art. 3 - Duties of forensic geneticist
- Art. 4 - Professional update
- Art. 5 - Publishing of forensic geneticist role
- Art. 6 - Media relations duties

II RELATIONS WITH THOSE ASSIGNING THE JOB

- Art. 7 - Assignment
- Art. 8 - Conflict of interest
- Art. 9 - Fulfillment of the mandate
- Art. 10 - Compensation agreement
- Art. 11 - Information and consent duties
- Art. 12 - Professional confidentiality
- Art. 13 - Renounce of the assignment
- Art. 14 - Prohibition of professional activities without titles

III RELATIONS WITH OTHERS FORENSIC GENETICISTS

- Art. 15 - Correctness between colleagues

IV FORENSIC GENETICIST DUTIES IN COURT

- Art. 16 - Prohibition of offensive expressions

V RELATIONS WITH THIRD PARTIES AND COUNTERPARTIES

- Art. 17 - Relations with third parties
- Art. 18 - Job recruitment against a part already assisted

VI DUTIES OF FORENSIC GENETICIST IN MATTER OF PRIVACY

- Art. 19- Data protection according to EU GDPR 679//16 regulation
- Art. 20- Data protection according to the Italian law n. 85/2009 (National forensic DNA database)
- Art. 21- Transmission, reception, storage and deletion of sensitive data
- Art. 22- Data protection in judicial authorities and personal reports

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The rules of conduct apply to all forensic geneticists belonging to the GeFI and to all those who share the GeFI targets in their professional activity, in reciprocal relationships and in those with third parties. This code of conduct is intended as an ethical based guide not imposed by outside legislations and hence members voluntarily adhere. The guiding principles considered have been drawn from professional deontological codes of each profession involved in the forensic genetics field as well from suggestions made by the forensic scientific community. The principles have been written with the hope that all forensic geneticists will incorporate them into their daily work, describing some specific rules to supplement existing codes adopted by professional organizations; in addition, these principles are intended to create a culture of ethical behavior and professional responsibility.

The code of conduct is designed to promote integrity among practitioners, and to increase public community confidence in the quality of forensic genetics. It is not to be construed that these principles are all-inclusive, but they represent general standards, which each forensic geneticist should know and follow. Serious or repeated infractions of these principles may be regarded as inconsistent with membership in GeFI group. It is up to the Disciplinary Commissions of the professional registers, to which they belong to the power to apply, in compliance with the procedures provided for by the rules, the appropriate and proportionate sanctions to the ethical violation committed, a violation that one has the obligation to report to the Order to which the professional refers.