

In Sourour's "The Code I'm still ashamed of" he was writing code for a website to give general information about a drug for a pharmaceutical company in Canada. When creating the website, he realized it was more of a website to advertise the drug than give general information about it, which was his first indication that something didn't seem right. His next indication was when he was creating a quiz to recommend drugs to teenage girls based on their answers. The client appeared to withhold the requirements for what the drug the answers should lead to. The answers the client sent him to code into the quiz bothered him because all the answers appeared to lead to one drug which give the teen girls no options but the one drug the client was trying to advertise/sell. Despite how Sourour's code made him feel, he honored the job he was tasked with doing for his employer and later found out that the drug being advertised caused a teenage girl to have depressive and suicidal thoughts that drove her to suicide. This made Sourour feel like he was at some kind of fault for the girl's death. In this Case Analysis I will argue that Utilitarianism shows us that the code was morally problematic because it used to immorally advertise a drug that could lead teen girls to suicide and that Sourour should have changed the code. After all, he felt at fault for the deaths of these girls and that his morally wrong code was linked to those deaths.

ACM code of ethics is a rather long and in-depth code. One of the principles ACM lays out is the principle to avoid harm to others. This principle prohibits the use of computer technology in a way to harm a number of groups of people but included in that group of people is the general public. Under the principle to avoid harm to others, it does include a portion about well-intended actions. In this section, it goes on to say accomplishing duties can lead to harm and if such a possibility happens it is the responsibility of the person or team to undo or mitigate the negative consequences as much as possible.

The IEEE code of ethics is the opposite of the ACM Code, that being it's short and to the point but leaves room for Interpretation. The very first code in the IEE code of ethics regards the safety, health, and welfare of the public. In this code, it's stated that the person(s) should strive to comply with an ethical design and maintain development practices that disclose factors that might endanger the public or the environment.

Using the codes mentioned previously from ACM and IEEE, Sourour should have considered, not that he probably did, the risk to public health that website and quiz would create. Under the ACM principle mentioned, after Sourour saw the article about the teen girl's suicide, he should have gone back into the code for either or both the website and the quiz and add something about the side effects. This act could go against His employer's requirements or wishes and get him fired, but as he stated later in the article he left soon after finding out about the girl's death. Now looking at his actions against the IEEE code of ethics, Sourour should have snuck in a disclaimer before the girl's death once he had a suspicion that something was missing. If he didn't have the information at the time, he should have gone to the account manager or the client and asked for the information to disclose to the public. Now going back to what I previously said, after seeing the article about the girl's suicide and being linked to the drug advertised, he should have gone back and added disclosures about the side effects for the general public to be aware about.

Utilitarianism is a consequentialism ideal that follows the idea that the action of a person is good exactly when the consequence of the action increases the amount of good in the world. Sourour's actions he followed went against this, as he did not change the code, and teen girls continued to be led to suicide as a result of the drug. However, as I stated before, Sourour could've changed the code to disclose the suicidal ideation side effect. Sourour could have done this with or without his employer's or client's knowledge and prevented the suicides of many teen girls. With Utilitarianism there is no good gained without a sacrifice. The sacrifice here would have been Sourour's job at the pharmaceutical company. Since the side effects weren't in the requirements to be disclosed on the website or in the quiz, it is like the client wouldn't have liked this and Sourour would have lost his job. Although Sourour would have been out of a job if these events took place, The general public would be safer from this drug knowing the depressive thoughts and suicidal ideation side effects.

Armstrong talks about the moral obligations that engineers have for public safety. In this Armstrong talks that for an engineer to go public with the information about a product they need to have concern that the harm that will be done by the said product will be serious to the public and should go to their superiors or, if necessary, higher channels such as the board or directors about their concerns. Armstrong also tells what the engineer would need to make their case to their corporation about the safety concerns. In this, Armstrong states that the engineer must have documented evidence that would convince the superiors that the

product is a risk to public safety. In addition to that, the evidence must be strong enough to release to the public and give them the proper information.

In Sourour's situation, he applies to the engineering field, as coders are software engineers. Armstrong's concept lays out a step-by-step of what Sourour should have done with the information and the concerns he had for the product he was helping advertise. In his case, Sourour didn't take his concerns to his superiors or did much about his concerns other than tell his sister to not take the drug and leave the company. Sourour had a moral obligation to do something about his concerns for public safety and took the proper channels and minimized the risk and didn't. By Armstrong's concept, Sourour looked selfless by only warning one of his family members and then leaving the company. However, I could understand that Sourour was a little panicked that he had been a part of the teen girl's suicides even though he was just following the requirements of his client, but that's not an excuse for not fulfilling his moral obligations to the public. Sourour even stated in his article that at the time of writing it, the public was still dealing with the drug.

Using Utilitarianism, Sourour did not pick the option for the greater good of the world. His Choices were between going to his superiors/employers about the risk to public safety and helping the public or letting his superiors/employers deal with it on their own and only helping his sister. His choice was to inform his sister and leave the job because he couldn't deal with the guilt, he felt for coding that website that did not disclose the risk to the public. Sourour should have made a case up from the news reports of the suicides and the show that the risk was missing from the website and brought it to his employers/superiors. At this point, if the superiors were reasonable, they would take it up with the clients and he could fix the website to include side effects and the risk the drug imposed on the public. Then the client should have released the information to the public to stop taking the drug if they started to experience the side effects. This route would have been a more utilitarian approach to the situation with the consequences to Sourour being him experiencing guilt for not including or bringing up the misinformation before the website went live.

I believe that Sourour didn't take the best possible route for dealing with the risk to public safety. There were steps that he should have taken to help prevent the further death of the teen girls, rather than just telling his sister and leaving the company because of the guilt he felt. I can understand the panic and the anxiety the Sourour might have felt when seeing the article about the girl's suicide linked to the drug, he help create the website for, but that just proves more that he should have done something to help the public. The worst thing Sourour would have

experienced if he had taken the case public and worked with his superiors and client to remedy his concerns is having to jump through a bunch of hoops or getting let go because of the situation which the latter wouldn't have made much of a difference since Sourour decided to leave anyways. Something I didn't talk about in my argument was that Sourour later went on to make think more ethically when he codes and the implications it might bring upon others. He did state that this all happened early on in his career and has shown he has learned from it.