

## Ethics Committees and Values

Global Ethics Forum, Geneva, 23-25 June 2016  
Higher Education - Ethics in Action

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# Committees

Committees may be a very useful instrument to expand values and let the community know about them.

- On how to behave,
- On how to treat some dilematic clinical cases,
- On how to do research.

However, they should be well organized and educated.

## A cautionary case

- God's committee: 1961 Admissions and Policies Committee of the Seattle Artificial Kidney Center at Swedish Hospital
- Who should be chosen and under what basis
- Seven citizens: lawyer, minister, banker, housewife, state government official, labor leader, and surgeon.
- Scandal over their policies and decisions!

# Different ethics committees

Deontological committees

Clinical ethics committees

Research ethics committees

## Deontological Committee

- \* Internal to the institution. Evaluates problems that may arise within. For example, among co-workers or colleagues.
- In education institutions, problems with students such as plagiarism, misconduct, etc.
- Members are professors, directives...
- May sanction members of the institution because of their misconduct.

# Clinical Ethic Committee

- In medical institutions/ hospitals
- Analyze cases that present an ethical problem (beginning or end of life, resource allocation, etc)
- Should educate itself,
- Has to educate the institution and the community.
- Can formulate policy guidelines for the institution.
  
- Do not mandate, it only provides advice.

## Research Ethics Committee

- In the US is also known as IRB (Institutional Review Board):
- Analyze the ethical aspects of research protocols,
- Main goal is to protect the research subjects.
- Very important for clinical research but also for social science research and other type of research. Important role in high education.
- Has veto power and may introduce changes.

## Conclusions

- Just “good intentions” or “nice” people is not enough.
- Importance of values and education of members of different committees.
- Different power and roles in their institutions.
- Some of them may have an educational role.
- Some may help improve the ethical behavior of the institution.