



Defense Health Agency (DHA) Clinical Communities Speaker Series
JUNE 2023 CCSS: Clinical Updates to Optimize Patient Outcomes in Primary Care

S02: Military Medical Ethics in the New Era of Symmetrical Conflict

Resource List

The article, [How Should Access to Military Health Care Facilities be Controlled in Conflict](#) (2022), provides commentary on a case analysis that examines the principles that govern decisions about which patients might be admitted to an international military hospital during humanitarian or combat operations. It explores the balance between duties under the Geneva Conventions and other international humanitarian laws. The article concludes that conflict and other humanitarian crises might require health care workers to make very difficult decisions that have substantial ethical implications. Many issues, such as the care of nonmilitary patients with predictable health emergencies (e.g., severe trauma, obstetric crises, severe burns), can be anticipated and mitigated by policy, procedures, and training. It is important that clinical health care workers are able to fulfill their legal and ethical duty to provide individual health care solely on the basis of clinical need.

King's College London is providing a [Military Healthcare Ethics](#) (2023) continuing professional development course. This self-paced online course is designed to provide a comprehensive introduction to the topic of military healthcare ethics and to explore the issues of practicing healthcare ethically in the military setting. Military ethics covers the professional behaviors of military practitioners based on International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and all other behaviors in employment in the armed forces. Military Healthcare Ethics (MHE) lies at the intersection of medical and military ethics. It is underpinned by the principle that medical facilities and personnel are fundamentally humanitarian actors afforded protection under IHL. These extend from conflict into the wider military environment and reflect the application of medical ethics into the unique context of the armed forces.

On November 8, 2017, the Department of Defense (DoD) issued the [DoD Instruction \(DODI\) 6025.07, Military Ethics in the Military Health System](#), (2017). This instruction establishes policy, assigns responsibilities and prescribes minimum requirements for the DoD Medical Ethics Program (DoDMEP). Guidance is provided for military health care personnel in all locations and the unique challenges associated with the role of military health care professionals are addressed. The Military Health System (MHS) views the responsibilities of health care personnel and military professionals as mutually reinforcing. DoDI 6025.07 states that members of the MHS will provide competent health care with compassion and respect for human dignity and rights and that all individuals are treated with respect and tolerance. Discrimination on the basis of age, sexual orientation, gender, race, ethnicity, language, disease, disability, religion, or rank is forbidden because it is inconsistent with the ideals and principles of the MHS.

The United Nations (UN) has a dedicated webpage for the [UN Ethics Office](#) (2018) that promotes an ethical organizational culture based on UN's core values of integrity, professionalism and respect for diversity, and the values outlined in the Code of Ethics for UN Personnel. These values include independence, loyalty, impartiality, integrity, accountability and respect for human rights. The Ethics Office assists the Secretary-General in ensuring that all staff members perform their functions consistent with the highest standards of integrity as required by the Charter of the United Nations. The UN Ethics Office provides a secure confidential environment where staff can feel free to consult on ethical issues and seek protection against retaliation for reporting misconduct.



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References

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