



Defense Health Agency (DHA) Clinical Communities Speaker Series

2024 FEB CCSS: Clinical Considerations and Current Trends in Women's Health

2024 FEB CCSS S02: Assessment of Ethical Issues Related to the Health Care of Women and Children: A Lookback at Recent Conflict Zones Resource List

The Defense Health Board (DHB) published the [Ethical Guidelines and Practices for U.S. Military Medical Professionals](#) in 2015. This summarizes findings and recommendations of the review of the military medical professional practice policies and guidelines. Their analysis focused on the following questions: 1) How can military medical professionals most appropriately balance their obligations to their patients against their obligations as military officers to help commanders maintain military readiness? And 2) How much latitude should military medical professionals be given to refuse participation in medical procedures or request excusal from military operations with which they have ethical reservations or disagreements? The DHB tasked its Medical Ethics Subcommittee to conduct its review of military medical professional practice policies and guidelines.

The authors of [A Consensus Framework for the Humanitarian Surgical Response to Armed Conflict in 21st Century Warfare](#) (2020) discuss how armed conflict in the 21st century poses new challenges to a humanitarian surgical response. These changes impact security requirements, access to patients, and communities in need, limited deployable surgical assets, resource constraints, and the requirement to address both traumatic injuries as well as emergency surgical needs of the population. At the same time, recent improvements in trauma care and systems have reduced injury-related mortality. This combination of new challenges and medical capabilities warrants reconsideration of long-standing humanitarian surgery protocol. With these considerations, the authors describe a framework for revising trauma protocols, that address security, medical requirements, legal and ethical principles.

The article [Serving on Multiple Fronts: A Grounded Theory Model of Complex Decision-Making in Military Mental Health Care](#) (2020) reviews the complexity that military mental health providers must navigate, due to multiple competing professional boundaries when delivering care. Currently no clear policy exists to balance clinical professional obligations to do no harm with potentially contradictory military policies. This study employed a grounded theory approach to examine behavioral health providers' decision-making in the face of their dual roles.

The complexity of dual roles continues on in the article [Medical Ethics During Armed Conflicts: Dilemmas of a Physician Soldier](#) (2021). The dichotomous role of being a humane physician and a patriotic soldier create a conflict in primary functions. A service member must protect national security at all costs, while a doctor has a moral obligation for their patients. Military physicians must embrace both roles, and this article explores the challenges that come with managing to this division. The discussion also takes into account healthcare provision during periods of armed conflict, dual loyalty, pharmaceutical bioethics in conflict zones and ethical treatment of civilians.



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