

## **A7 Addressing ethical issues in clinical care and public health**

### Entry Scenario

The entry scenario addresses a variety of issues and problems associated with the module topic. It may be used at the beginning of the course to stimulate the students to identify their own needs and interests. The results may be utilized by the individual to assess own learning process, or be integrated with class objectives. This module proposes two similar approaches to address ethical issues in the field of clinical care and public health.

### General goals

By completing the module the participant will be able to:

- I. Describe the need for bioethics in the field of adolescent health and its fundamental principles
- II. Define the necessary steps in a strategy for deliberation when faced with an ethical dilemma in adolescent care
- III. Apply the deliberation approach to addressing ethical dilemmas encountered in clinical practice
- IV. Apply the deliberation approach to addressing ethical dilemmas encountered in adolescent public health

### Clinical vignette

A sixteen-year-old girl is brought to a health professional by her teacher. The teacher suspects that she may be pregnant as her last period was ten weeks ago. A pregnancy test/examination is performed, and it is positive. She has a regular boyfriend. The father is a politician running for the position of mayor. She is afraid that her parents may find out about her pregnancy. The girl is shocked about being pregnant and does not know what to do.

### Public health situation

An increasing number of young people of both sexes aged between 16 and 18 in your country are becoming HIV positive. Those responsible for the overall health policy have decided that a program of sex education needs to be introduced into all schools. The best way to introduce and organize this program is for it to be the responsibility of the local health workers, as they will know the needs of their own individual communities. The government has decided that the program should begin when children are 10 years old, but that its content should be decided locally. You know that, in order to be effective, these programs need to be explicit. This fact comes



into conflict with the religious and cultural beliefs of your local community. In introducing the sex education program you want to make sure that it is acceptable to your local community from the start.

The two situations are about sexual health:

Here are other suggestions (from the slides of module A7) for clinical vignettes

1

You are a pediatrician working at the local Ministry of Health community clinic and you have a strong interest in adolescent medicine. Jamil, who is 17 years old, is sent to you by the school nurse: something is wrong with this pupil who suddenly is skipping school and seems anxious.

After two consultations, you understand that he misuses/abuses prescription medications- opioids, which he is buying from his friend without his parents knowing. He feels depressed and doesn't accept his father's psychological pressure. On one occasion, he was brought back home by a peer who was driving and who had had medication as well and they nearly had an accident.

You get a visit from the mother, who wants some information and advice, as she is concerned too by her son's behavior

2

15 year old boy from Kenya attends HIV clinic with his mother. His mother has not yet disclosed his HIV status to him, and the clinical officer who sees him has agreed to not disclose. He knows that he has a chronic infection that needs medications.

He feels close to the pediatric nursing staff, and confides that he is interested in relationships and sex. Nurses raise the concern that, without disclosure, he is unable to protect himself, and may inadvertently expose a partner to HIV

3

Hanan is a 14 years old female whom you have been treating for acne for the past 6 months. Her father drops her off at the clinic for her follow-up visits every 2 months.



At her last visit, Hanan didn't seem to be her usual cheerful self. Upon further discussion and probing, she reported that she has been in e-communication with a 20 year old male (Faris) on SnapChat mobile application. Faris requested that Hanan meet him at a nearby shopping center. When she refused, he threatened to spread her photos (which she had shared with him) with others.

Hanan is terrified that her family members will somehow find out about the photos and about her relationship with Faris.

## Goal I: Describe the need for bioethics in the field of adolescent health and its fundamental principles

	Training objectives	Educational Methodology	Activities, issues and question
	<p><b>A. Explore the audience's experiences in situations with adolescents where there was no clear solution to the problem.</b></p> <p><b>B. Review principles of bioethics</b></p> <p><b>C. List moral values which apply to bioethics</b></p>	<p>Short group work</p> <p>Plenary</p> <p>Other pedagogical methods: Fishbowl, round about or knee to knee, case studies</p> <p>Minilecture , facilitated discussion, expert panel (VIPP manual)</p> <p>Mini-lecture</p> <p>Group discussion</p>	<p>Ask each group to discuss their experiences of difficult situations, selecting one for discussion.</p> <p>The facilitator lists the various problems and promotes exploration of the following questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Why do the participants think that these were challenging situations?</li> <li>2. Were there different ways to handle these situations?</li> <li>3. What were the conflicting values involved?</li> <li>4. Which of these situations represented ethical dilemmas?</li> <li>5. How do they define an ethical dilemma?</li> </ol> <p>Some definitions of bioethics</p> <p>Discuss the meaning of moral values:</p> <p>Autonomy Beneficence Non malfeasance Justice and equity</p> <p>Solidarity Integrity Participation</p>

			<b>Vulnerability etc.</b>
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	<b>Training objectives</b>	<b>Educational Methodology</b>	<b>Activities, issues and question</b>
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<p><b>KNOW</b></p>	<p><b>D. Describe and discuss the particular characteristics of adolescence that give rise to ethical dilemmas related to their health care.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Under age</li> <li>• Different dimensions of maturity (esp. decisional)</li> <li>• Vulnerability (at risk)</li> <li>• Cultural + religious restrictions</li> <li>• Financial dependence</li> </ul> <p><b>E. List the main issues that tend to create ethical dilemmas in adolescent clinical health care:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informed consent</li> <li>• Competence</li> <li>• Confidentiality</li> <li>• Financial responsibility</li> </ul> <p><b>In public Health:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data (production, protection)</li> <li>• Organization of service delivery</li> <li>▪ <b>Ethics of preventive interventions</b></li> </ul> <p><b>F. Understand the strengths and constraints of the guideline documents for medical ethics in adolescent health</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UN Convention of the Rights of the Child</li> <li>• Belmont report</li> </ul>	<p>Group work followed by summary in plenum</p> <p>Case studies VIPP</p> <p>Interactive lecture</p> <p>(link this objective to module A4 confidentiality and consent)</p> <p>Use this principles in groupe work on public health issues (field work, case studies,..:VIPP manual)</p>	<p>What is unique in the situation of adolescents that makes it mandatory to address ethical dilemmas?</p> <p>Discuss this referring to the entry scenario</p> <p>Give examples of public health situations which raise ethical concerns</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sexual education (see entry scenario)</li> <li>• Drug testing in school</li> <li>• Addressing nutrition in multicultural contexts</li> </ul>
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	<a href="http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/regulations-and-policy/belmont-report/">http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/regulations-and-policy/belmont-report/</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Country/Local</li> </ul>		
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**Goal II: Define the necessary steps for deliberation when faced with an ethical dilemma in adolescent care**

	Training objectives	Educational Methodology	Activities, issues and question
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KNOW	<b>A. Strengthen the provider's skills directly related to addressing ethical dilemmas in adolescence:</b>	Interactive lecture. Group discussion	Participants report on their own experience in these areas
AND		(link with module A1, A3, A4)	
ATT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assess development level of adolescent</li> <li>- Assess <u>competence</u> of adolescent</li> <li>- Effective communication with adolescents</li> </ul>	Group discussion	Use some examples of situations reported earlier by the audience
	<b>B. Strengthen the provider's skills related to the adolescent's environment</b>	(link with module A1, A3, A4)	<b>Use following scenario to exemplify the step by step process to address ethical issues:</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dealing with parents (confidentiality vs. connectedness)</li> <li>- Responding to religious-legal-cultural arguments</li> </ul>	Interactive lecture	You work as the head public health officer in a large city and have developed a health promotion program. Your public health administration thinks it is an excellent program but is unable to support it financially. You have been totally unsuccessful in getting financial support for this elsewhere.
	<b>C. Identify the steps for addressing ethical issues (the deliberation process)</b>	For clinical situations: you could also use the 4 box method (see slides of module A7 or annex)	A tobacco company offers to finance a health promotion program including HIV prevention. The sexual health problems are on the increase locally and you are pressed to do something about it. How do you decide whether to accept the offer or not?
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Define the ethical dilemma in the case to be discussed</li> <li>2. Identify contributing factors e.g. legal framework</li> <li>3. Identify main stakeholders involved</li> <li>4. Define the options</li> <li>5. Assess medical/health/social consequences of each option</li> <li>6. Consider ethical values linked with each option</li> </ol>		

	7. Discuss which are the best options for the client 8. Choose option/s		
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### Goal III: Apply the deliberation approach to addressing ethical dilemmas encountered in clinical practice

	Training objectives	Educational Methodology	Activities, Issues and Questions
SKILL	<p><b>Apply the step-by-step process to solve the ethical issues provided in the adjacent scenario.</b></p>	<p>Role play : encourage professionals to play the role of difficult patients/parents as a method of eye opening on different views of a clinical situation)</p> <p>For clinical situations you could also use the 4 box method (see slides of module A7 or annex )</p>	<p>Use any of the clinical case scenarios:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Entry scenario</li> <li>2. A 15-year-old boy, Joachim, comes to your services and consults for a spot on his penis. His family is migrant. For the last five years the parents and the boy have been employed by an affluent family in your area. On questioning the boy, it turns out that six months before, the household owner has asked the boy to perform mutual oral sex with him. The household owner has threatened to throw the whole family out if the boy says anything about this single incident</li> <li>3. Kim is 17 year old and suffers from a brain tumour. He has already undergone chemotherapy with severe side effects (loss of hairs, nausea, etc). The tumour is potentially curable with a second step of chemotherapy plus radiotherapy. Both the adolescent and his parents refuse the second cure and want to use some herbal treatment, which is supplied by a naturopath. You are the doctor in charge of the patient and have to make a decision.</li> </ol>
	<p><b>Discuss the strengths and limitations of the deliberation procedure or the 4 box method</b></p>	<p>Discussion in plenary Spiderweb</p>	<p>What are the main difficulties encountered?</p> <p>Audience discusses if they see a possibility to apply this technique in their everyday clinical environment</p>

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#### Goal IV: Apply the deliberation approach to addressing ethical dilemmas encountered in adolescent public health

	Training objectives	Educational Methodology	Activities, Issues and Questions
SKILL	<b>Apply the step-by-step process to solve the ethical issues provided in the adjacent scenario.</b>	Group work (role play)	<p>Use any of the public health scenarios:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Entry scenario</li> <li>2. You are a professional working in the area of sexual &amp; reproductive health in a deprived area of a large city. A 15-year-old adolescent male comes to see you for treatment of a sexually transmitted infection. He has had unsafe sex with a male partner in order to finance his intravenous drug habit. You realise that a large number of local young boys are also consulting for STI's. You want to set up a prevention program and invite the local medical officer to help. The health officer says that the available funding is going to pay only for programs promoting abstinence. He does not see any possibility of raising more money for another prevention program. As homosexuality is heavily condemned, it is unacceptable to put financial resources into targeting this high-risk group. You organize a meeting with colleagues and other professionals to discuss different options.</li> </ol>

	<p><b>Discuss the strengths and limitations of the deliberation procedure.</b></p>	<p>Discussion in plenary.</p>	<p>3. You work in a western middle-size city of 100,000 inhabitants with about 60% of immigrants from several parts of the world. You are offered a 200,000 US\$ grant from a large nutrition company making ready-for-use meals to fight against a high rate of obesity among young people. They are willing to pay for dieticians giving courses in the schools and to set up school centres to treat obese adolescents. They have already printed a large number of fact sheets focusing on healthy eating.</p> <p>Audience discusses if they see a possibility to apply such technique in their everyday clinical environment</p>
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## References

### **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child**

<http://www.unicef.org/crc> (ok July 2016)

### **The European Convention on Human Rights**

<http://www.hri.org/docs/ECHR50.html> (ok July 2016)

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### **American Academy of Pediatrics. Policy Statement—Consent for Emergency Medical Services for Children and Adolescents. Pediatrics 2011;128:427–433**

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### **Model Curriculum: Association of Schools of Public Health**

<http://www.asph.org/document.cfm?page=782> (not accessed July 2016)

### **Course on Public Health Ethics: University of North Carolina Chapel Hill – School of Public Health**

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### **Public Health Ethics (Journal Free Access)**

<http://phe.oxfordjournals.org/>



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**Preliminary questions**

What are the main ethical issues or questions?

Who is responsible for making the final decisions (along with the adolescent)?

Organizing data:

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Medical indications</b>	<b>Patient and family preferences</b>
What are we trying to achieve? Patient medical problem, history, diagnosis, prognosis Acute/chronic? Critical? Reversible? Goals of treatment	Wishes or presumed wishes of family/patient Competent? Informed of benefits/risks? Does patient understand and consent? Prior preferences? Is patient's right to choose respected? Possible reasons for refusing?

3 <b>Quality of life</b>	4 <b>Contextual issues</b>
<p>Determined by the patient's own preferences</p> <p>Prospects with/without treatment to return to normal life?</p> <p>Likely physical/mental/social deficits with treatment</p> <p>Provider bias?</p> <p>Any plan/reason to forego treatment?</p> <p>Plans for comfort/palliation?</p>	<p>Every encounter occurs within a larger context</p> <p>Family issues? Provider issues?</p> <p>Financial factors?</p> <p>Religious/cultural factors?</p> <p>Problems with allocation of resources?</p> <p>Law?</p> <p>Conflicts of interest for provider/institution?</p>

#### Ethical Analysis

- Identifying the goals of care
- Balancing benefits & burdens
- "Best interest" of the patient
  - Identified by adolescent
  - Identified by family
  - Identified by the health care team