ESCOLA DE ENFERMAGEM
Universidade de São Paulo
ETHICS IN PRIMARY HEALTH CARE

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ETHICAL ISSUES IN HEALTH CARE

- Depends on complexity level and characteristics of care
- Primary health care: more frequent encounters, less urgent conditions
- Patients: less dependent, they are at home
- Objectives of health care: long-term goals
- Ethical issues: subtle / unnoticed, everyday ethics
ETHICAL ISSUES

Inventory of ethical problems

Qualitative Questionnary: IPE-APS

40 ethical problems: relationship patients, team and healthcare system
ETHICAL ISSUES IN PRIMARY CARE
BRAZIL

- Difficulties to establish the boundaries of clinical relationship
  Family Privacy and confidentiality

- Minors who request oral contraception without their parents’ authorization

MORAL DELIBERATION

Reach practical and normative conclusions to the professional practice of nurses and doctors in primary health care

34 nurses
36 physicians
MORAL DELIBERATION

- Critical, hermeneutical, qualitative research
- Integrated empirical ethics research (IEER)  
  Molewijk et al 2003, 2004
- Deliberative Bioethics – Diego Gracia
- Integrative Empirical Ethics Research (IEER) based on the deliberative bioethics
B is a 15 years old girl. She attends to a primary healthcare center and tells to the health team that recently she felt in love with a 16 years old boy. Her parents think she is very young and prohibited dating. The girl assures she does not have an active sex life, but asks for the prescription of an oral hormonal contraceptive. She also asks the team do not tell anything about this to her parents.

What would you recommend for the healthcare team?

Values in conflict: (1) privacy and confidentiality of adolescent (2) parents' responsibility for the health of their children
Motivation to the trend to the extreme course of prescribing:
- prevent adolescent’s pregnancy – minimal harm
Mr. M has syphilis. He decided not to tell anything about his disease to his wife. But he wants to protect her from disease. While on treatment, he asks to healthcare team to take exams in his wife without informing her about his health condition.

What would you recommend for the healthcare team?

Values in conflict: (1) respect for privacy and confidentiality in the clinical relationship with the husband (2) honesty and veracity in the clinical relationship with the wife.
Test the wife without informing anything to her. Test the wife for syphilis, after informing her about.

Treat the husband, support him to tell the truth to his wife and test the wife only after he tells the truth.

Do not test the wife; do not say anything to her and only treat the husband.

What can explain the trend to the middle courses of action?

-The experience with aids
CONCLUSIONS

- Primary health care: everyday ethics

- Many issues hardly are perceived as an ethical problem

- Require from professionals an acute moral sensibility

- Professional decide differently depending on the characteristics of the case and their experiences

- Moral deliberation training could contribute to improve moral sensibility and practical wisdom in decision making
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