Ethical Training in Allied Health Professions Education

Current Pedagogical Approaches
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Introduction
Ethics Education in Health Care

• Ethics education has been a concern of medical, nursing and allied health professions education for decades

• Much of the literature has focused on theory.
  – best pedagogies
  – formal or “hidden” curriculum
  – the nature of medical or nursing ethics
  – best ethical models
  – relation to ethics curriculums to the broader cultural milieu
  – broader expectations of professionalism.

• Effects of ethics training on ethical decision making

• BUT MUCH IS STILL SUBJECTIVE
  – Saunders DE Jr. Reflections on ethics as a part of the higher education curriculum. Journal of the South Carolina Medical Association 2006
  - concerns by allied health educators as they try to ascertain the appropriate place of ethics in their curricula.
  - DIT: a course in biomedical ethics was found to significantly impact principled moral reasoning scores
  - Consensus has not been reached on the philosophy, the purpose, and the pedagogy of ethics education.
  - Recommends case studies in ethical theory, decision making, and practical application
  - Discrete ethics course with additional ethics modules integrated throughout the professional curriculum.
Methods
Population Details

• ASAHP Mailing List
  – Thanks to the ASAHP Board

• 106 Institutional Members
  – 215 e-mail addresses
  – Included all *.edu institutions AND
    • 3 “*.org”; 2 “*.ca”; 1 “*.com” verified as having AHP programs
  – Not included: 28 commercial or retired individuals

• N=43 (response rate = 41%)
Survey Details

• Web Based Survey developed for study
  – Using mrInterview (SPSS, Inc.)
  – Vetted ‘face valid’ by WSU Social Science Research Lab
  – Piloted with 10 institutions

• “Ethics” Education was not defined
  – Each institution defined for itself

• May 2006: e-mail request for participation
  – Requested only 1 response per institution
  – Requested most appropriate person respond
  – 30 May 2006: second request sent

• 1 July 2006: survey closed
  – 45 responses (2 duplicate institutional responses eliminated)
Results
Institutional Respondents

- Public, part of a larger university (n=19)
- Public, stand alone (n=13)
- Private, stand alone (n=7)
- Private, part of a larger university (n=4)
Individual Responder

- Dean (n=15)
- Assistant/Associate Dean (n=6)
- Director (n=6)
- Department Chair (n=9)
- Ethics Faculty (n=4)
- Faculty, other (n=3)
Ethics Training in Curriculum?

Percentage

n=41

n=2
Formal Ethics Class Offered?

- Yes: 30 respondents
- No: 11 respondents

Percentage of respondents who answered 'Yes': 100%
Percentage of respondents who answered 'No': 36.36%
Who Teaches Ethics

- HP faculty w/ formal train (n=9)
- HP faculty w/ informal train (n=20)
- Philosophy (n=6)
- Philosophy & HC (n=2)
- Other (n=4)

Total: 41

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Total: 41
Ethics As Part Of Other Classes

Yes: n=39
No: n=2
Ethics via Clinical Training

Percentage

Yes: n=29
No: n=12
Goals of Training

- good ethical practices: n=3
- ethic reasoning skills: n=1
- both: n=37

Percentage
Adequate Training?

Percentage

Yes: n=31
No: n=10
no answer: n=2
Adequate Practice?

Percentage

Yes: n=32
No: n=7
no answer: n=4
Training Effective?

- Yes: n=22, 100% (50% response)
- No: n=19, 0% (0% response)
- Don't Know: n=19, 0% (0% response)
Student surveys re: ethics?

Percentage

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Yes  

n=6

No  

n=37
Effectiveness Criteria

Note: parenthesis shows # of comments (not institutions)

• Behavioral Observations
  – Clinical Education (14)
  – Student Conduct Violations (2)

• Course Eval
  – Tests (6)
  – Q&A (1)
  – Journals, Blogs (2)
  – Course Objective (2) sans direct assessment

• Case Study / Standardized Patients (5)
• Student Assessment of Training (5)
• Survey (Alumni, Employer) (2)
How do you assess effectiveness?

- Exams, etc (6)
  - Subjective evaluations by instructor (3)
  - Response to probes (1)
- Preceptors Evaluation (6)
- Course Evaluations (2)
- Licensure
- Student Survey

- “Need for better evaluative tools … and opportunities to share approaches, content, and evaluative tools nationally.”
Students’ Perceptions (16)  
(mostly from teaching evaluations)

• Feedback is generally positive
• Negative comments include:
  – … they prefer clinical medicine relative courses
  – Boring
  – "Waste of time"
  – No real evidence that it is liked or disliked
  – Complain about difficulty of the formal ethics course

• Varies widely, from "greatly appreciated" to "probably irrelevant to my practice"
Considering Changes in Training?

Yes: 7%
No: 50%
Unsure: 16%
Faculty Development in Ethics

- Yes: n=16
- No: n=27
Resources for Faculty Development?

• Mostly Through General Faculty Development Mechanisms
  – Rounds
  – Continue education
  – consults

• Also
  – Internal Consults
  – Printed Codes
How To Design A Program (74)

- Autonomy (10)
  - Confidentiality
  - Informed Consent
- Principle of Ethics
  - Applications (9)
- Ethical Reasoning (9)
- Professionalism (6)
  - Provider/Provider relationship
  - Provider/Patient relationship
- Cultural Competence (6)

- Case Studies (5)
- End of life (5)
- Law and Ethics (4)
- Ethics Committees
  - Ethics Audits (4)
- Social Justice (3)
- Research Ethics (3)
Improve Current Training (26)

- Available Tools (8)
  - Standardized Case Studies (3)
  - National Ethics Consultation Mechanism
- Faculty Development (2)
  - National Workshop
- Curriculum Embedding (3)
  - Specific Coursework
- Formalized testing
- Accreditation Requirement (2)
- Continuous Quality Improvement
Improve Current Assessment?

• Faculty Development (4)
  – Interdisciplinary Approaches (3)
• Standardized Curriculum/Cases/Courses (8)
• Formal Assessment (5)
  – Accreditation (1)
• National Workshops, etc (2)
• Develop Self Paced / Online Materials
Important Components

• Principles of ethics (9)
  – Applications (7)
  – Resources, etc (2)
• Critical thinking (7)
• Case studies (6)
  – Modeling Behaviors (4)
• Interdisciplinary (2)
• Discipline Specific / Professionalism (3)
• Research (2)
• Patients rights (3)
Why Important?

- Basic Fundamentals For Health Professionals (15)
- Needed Context For Practice (3)

- “Ethical decision making should be theoretically based … -not just a matter of personal opinion-…”
QUESTIONS?