



Ethics and Policy: Dealing with Public Attitudes

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The Move to Ethics

- Current Trend towards ethics scrutiny and oversight
 - Move away from paternalism
- Biotech advances, scandals, the rise of consumerism
- This is a social/public trend
 - Public inquiries
 - 'Openness', 'transparency'



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Questions

- What bearing should public attitudes and concerns have on ethics and policy in radiology practice?
 - What is ethical reasoning?
 - How should the profession regulate practice ethically?



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Plan

- A. What is Ethics?
- B. Ethics and Public Attitudes
- C. Ethical Reasoning
- D. Ethics and Policy
- E. Practical Conclusions
- F. Case: ICRP 2007



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A. What is Ethics?

What ought I/we to do?

Here:

- How ought the practice of radiology be conducted (by particular radiologists dealing with particular 'patients')?



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A. What is Ethics?

Ethics is:

- Essentially practical
- Obligations are very ordinary
- And numerous
 - What I ought to be doing right now ...

No useful distinction between morality and ethics



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B. Ethics and Public Attitudes

Why right and wrong are not determined by public attitudes:

1. Repugnant conclusions
 - Slavery, capital punishment is right
2. Difficulty in determining what counts as 'the public' and 'the public's values'
 - A representative individual?
 - Survey results: average, normal?



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B. Ethics and Public Attitudes

Why right and wrong are not determined by public attitudes:

3. Presumes a problematic account of morality
 - Moral convictions vs. (mere) tastes
 - Does not give a proper place to justification and argument



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C. Ethical Reasoning

How does ethical reasoning proceed?

1. Any facts will matter sometimes
2. Situations are complex
3. Normally what can be done is distinct from what ought to be done



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C. Ethical Reasoning

Elements of deciding:

- (i) considering the situation in sufficient detail
- (ii) identifying possible courses of action
- (iii) assessing the various potential outcomes/courses of action in each case



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D. Ethics and Policy

How ought the practice of radiology be 'regulated'?

- Laws, guidance, professional codes
- Subset of ethics questions
- Perceptions and appearances will need to be considered



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D. Ethics and Policy

- Public concerns and perceived public concerns drive much of the interest in ethics
- Public attitudes matter but ethical reasoning and argument *use* these facts and are not (should not) be determined by them.



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E. Practical Conclusions

1. Contextualised Codes/Regulations
 - Goal of the activity
 - Points of moral tension
2. Training – initial and ongoing
 - Focus: recognising/appreciating issues
3. Publicly accountable process of review/audit



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F. Case: ICRP 2007



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