

- Why do we need ethics?
- Why now, but not 30 years ago?
- What has changed?



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What is the Discipline: „Ethics?“

- A branch of philosophy.....



Ethics

- The aim of ethics is find an answer by careful analysis, reflection, discourse, and the use of logical, coherent and reasonable arguments to the question:
- what should I / we do (to live good lives).
- Which values, norms and principles should guide us – and why?
- Analytical; not based on ‘opinions’ or ‘emotions’ as main arguments.....

Ethics is not

- .. to be confused with what actually happens (moral, ethos)
- There is no ‚scientific-evidence-to-be-found-by-experiment-only-based-ethics‘
- Example: the Mafia code of behaviour should not determine the answer to the question what should we do?
- Ethics is a normative discipline: it seeks to provide orientation for what we SHOULD do

Roles, Function of Ethics

Varies according to context:

- Directive
- Provide an opinion
- Help with orientation
- accompanying an activity
- Provide an input that includes or should be combined with other inputs...

Difference Ethics and Medicine?

- Medicine: ‚natural‘ science: primarily understanding & maintaining the body ‚as is‘...
- Ethics: what should we do?
- But medical sciences going in the direction of being more able to change our physical being...
- Raising ethical questions; what should our body be, what should we do with the human body..

Need for ,more' (different?) Ethics? Why?

- Rapid developments in science and technology; new possibilities to act
- Individualism
- Political, economic freedom; move from authoritarian sources of orientation
- Less influence of theology
- different research choices
- Higher education
- Civil rights, human rights

Example

- 5 day old human embryo



- At this stage stem cells can be obtained; the embryo will be destroyed
- Stem cell research supportable, a duty, or reprehensible?

Why are we here? Development of Medical Ethics

• History as motor?

Increased Focus on Medical Ethics? History?



- The ,Doctors Trial'

The Tuskegee Syphilis Study

- USA; From 1932 to 1972
- Study on the effects of untreated syphilis on living subjects
- healthy African Americans were intentionally infected with syphilis without being told
- No, or insufficient treatment given.
- Interview with John Heller, main responsible person: "The men's status did not warrant ethical debate. They were subjects, not patients; clinical material, not sick people"

More Medical Ethics?

- Increasingly formalized
- The question: what should we do to be good physicians always existed ...

Changes in Content of Medical Ethics:

- individualism
- move from authoritarian sources of orientation
- higher education (of the public..)
- more questioning...

resulting in inter alia relationship physician – patient (client, customer) changing .. and still changing..

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