Course material

Course:

Ethics in Emergencies

Video:

7a Justice and standard of care

Concepts (extracted from automatically generated subtitles):

Implementation research. Participants of the details of the research study. Key features. Standard of care. Importance of the ethics principle of justice. Autonomy of all participants. Conduct of the research. Very relevant ethical issues. Strengths of implementation research. Practice of implementation research. Vulnerable groups. Extremely important factor. Emergencies. Resource allocation. Prevailing standard of care.



to video sequence search
(within Ethics in Emergencies.)



to video



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Now that we have discussed the importance of respecting the autonomy of all

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participants in implementation research in emergencies through obtaining informed consent and fully informing all participants of the details of the

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research study, we will move on to discuss the importance of the ethics principle of justice in the conduct of the research. In this course, we use the

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term «justice» in relation to achieving fairness and equity.

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Lack of justice or injustice would exacerbate disadvantage or disability. Key features and strengths of implementation research include that it is embedded within the

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day-to-day functioning of the health system, and should contribute to the strengthening of the health system. These features bring up all the

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very relevant ethical issues which relate to justice in the practice of implementation research, which typically becomes more acutely relevant during

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emergencies. These justice considerations include ensuring that all

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who may benefit from an intervention have the opportunity to participate, and that the research does not overlook or exacerbate inequities

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among research participants, communities or institutions. On a very practical level also, just conduct of implementation research in emergency must

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include consideration of fair treatment of research participants, which means paying attention to the standard of care and possible additional needs that may

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arise. As we discussed in chapter two, it is critically important for researchers to ensure appropriate representation of all potential research

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participants in implementation research conducted in emergencies. Researchers must plan how to include communities which may be even harder to reach

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in an emergency than under usual circumstances. In practice, this

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means that strategies and resource allocation must be considered at the planning stages to ensure that hard-to-reach and vulnerable populations are not left

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out. Researchers must be aware that conditions may change during emergency and harder to reach, or more vulnerable groups may be more

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likely to drop out or to face increasing barriers to participation. This also means, therefore, that attention must be paid throughout the conduct of the

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study to ensure that these groups are represented fairly and have

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equitable opportunities for participation. An extremely important factor related to implementation research in emergencies, which is conducted under real world

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circumstances, is the prevailing standard of care. As health systems are often disrupted, the usual standard of care

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may not be achievable. Many emergencies occur where health systems were weak to begin with, so even the non-emergency standards

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of care may not be acceptable. Despite this, researchers may argue, for example, that a control group would not be worse off being

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enrolled in the study than not being enrolled, and that the prevailing standard of care

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is acceptable. From a justice perspective, however, a minimum acceptable standard of care should be provided even to a control group. In-

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adequate standards of care cannot be ethically tolerated, and emergency should not be used as a justification to overlook poor care.

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Realistically, improvement in the standard of care may be beyond the capacity of the implementation researchers themselves. In an emergency, there is,

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however, an ethical imperative for the researchers to engage

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5m 13s



with stakeholders who can contribute to improving the standard of care in the community and to improve equity in access to a basic level of care for all, and not only for those participating in the study.

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5m 25s