Return to Clerkship Pandemic Ethics

Erika Abner, Faculty Lead, Ethics and Professionalism
Maria McDonald, Lawyer Ethicist
Susanna Talarico, Faculty Lead, Faculty Development

Disclosures

We have nothing to disclose

Objectives

By the end of this webinar, you will be able to:

- Review goals and objectives for the ethics session

- Describe tips for teaching online, including incorporating breakout rooms and engaging students

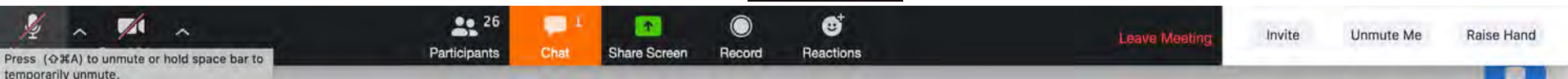- Describe ethical principles and issues arising from the current pandemic

Expectations

- Mute your mic, but get ready to jump in
- Try to leave your camera on
- There might be technological difficulties

Zoom Features that Encourage Interactivity

- Annotate

- Press space bar to unmute temporarily

- Raise Hand

- Use the Chat or Q&A Box

- Offer Reactions

Introductions

Have you been a tutor for an ethics tutorial in the past?

a) Yes, I'm a veteran
b) Yes, once or twice before
c) This is my first time. How exciting!
d) I'm still thinking about it

How comfortable are you using Zoom?

a) Very comfortable. I use it regularly for meetings or teaching online.

b) Comfortable, but looking for tips to increase interactivity.

c) I've experienced it as a participant, but not yet as host or facilitator.

d) I'm hoping this pandemic will be over soon so that I don't have to use it.

Learning Objectives for the Entire Pandemics Ethics Series

- To identify frameworks that guide ethical decision making. [Professional]
- To recognize inequities in the Covid-19 disease process and advocate for appropriate responses. [Health Advocate]
- To describe ethical issues arising from the Covid-19 pandemic, including systems and processes to ensure equitable access to resources. [Professional, Health Advocate, Leader]
- To critique and evaluate policies relating to resource allocation. [Leader, Health Advocate]
- To design strategies to manage mental health and moral distress resulting from the demands of responding to Covid-19. [Professional]

Overview

- Students have been introduced to a number of pandemic ethics issues in a lecture earlier this week.

- This session is an opportunity for students to explore a specific issue – resource allocation – in the context of four decision-making frameworks as applied to four patient case scenarios.

- The students will work in small groups to analyze their pre-assigned framework and apply that framework to select one patient to receive a ventilator.

- Your role as the tutor will be to manage the discussion and debrief with the students.

Session Format

Activity and Timing	Tutor Role
Introductions and Overview – 10 minutes	Introduce yourself and provide background Review the Key Background Points Review the Discussion Questions Review the Patient Cases Assign the Students to their Breakout Rooms

Student small group work – 25 minutes
  Student divided into two teams; each team assigned a specific ethical framework
  Students to address five **Discussion Questions**, apply their framework to choose a specific patient, and present arguments to support their choice
	Pop into Breakout Rooms (if you want)

Debate/Discussion – 20 minutes	Manage timing Probe for understanding
Debrief – 5 minutes	Discuss your experiences during the pandemic

Key background points

- Allocation of scarce resources should be guided by one or more ethical frameworks or "allocation systems".

- These frameworks reflect different principles and values.

- Different ethical principles may apply depending on the scenario:

  - During allocation of scarce critical care beds and knowing we cannot serve every patient, medical utility may be preferred over equity

  - When allocating vaccines and knowing we will eventually be able to vaccinate all, we may prefer "prioritizing those tasked with helping others" over equity.

Key background points, cont.

- Severe scarcity of resources creates ethical dilemmas for health care providers who have a duty to individual patients which is in conflict with the simultaneous goal of maximizing the survivability of the greatest number of people.
- Ethical allocation of scarce resources should promote an ethical process that includes:
  - Transparency
  - Inclusiveness
  - Consistency
  - Accountability

Discussion Questions

Question 1. Which considerations and values does your framework prioritize?

Question 2. Outline the ethically salient features of the case and each patient's characteristics which will help shape the clinical course of action.

Question 3. Based on your framework, what is the ethical course of action for this case, and why?

Question 4. What are the strengths and weaknesses of your framework?

Question 5. What are the broader consequences of using your framework, and are there any populations that may be systematically disadvantaged?

Frameworks: Equality and Utility

Principle/Framework	Description	Practice Implications
Equality	Each individual's interests count equally unless there are good reasons to prioritize resources differentially. Characteristics such as creed, race, ethnicity, ability, gender should not serve as basis for differential resource allocation. This principle can be used to justify allocation by lottery (e.g. by chance) or by a system of first-come first-served.	May be used to guide allocation of scarce resources among individuals or populations who can be expected to derive the same benefit from the resource E.g. vaccines among high risk populations; ventilators among those with similar clinical indications for benefit.
Utility/Best Outcomes	This principle can be used to justify the allocation of resources according to their capacity to do the most good, or to minimize harm. E.g. Using available resources to save most lives possible, or to maximize quality of life.	May be most appropriate to guide the allocation of scarce resources that confer substantially different benefits to different individuals. E.g. ventilators to those expected to derive the most benefit.

Frameworks: Prioritizing the worst off; Prioritizing those tasked with helping others

Prioritizing the worst off	This principle can be used to justify the allocation of resources to those in greatest medical need or those most at risk.	May be most appropriate to guide the allocation of resources that are designed or intended to protect those at risk. E.g. PPE for health care workers; vaccines for those most at risk of infection and severe illness, or those most in need (as in the case of provision of drugs in short supply to those needing them most urgently).
Prioritizing those tasked with helping others	This principle can be used to justify the allocation of resources to those who have certain skills or talents that can save many other people, or because something is owed to them on account of their participation in helping others.	May be most appropriate to guide the allocation of resources to health care workers, first responders, etc.

The Cases

- You are the chief physician of an ICU ward responsible for managing COVID-19 infected patients. While initially there were few patients and enough ventilators, you have since seen an upsurge of patients and a shortage of resources. Today, several patients have been admitted with respiratory failure and urgently require a ventilator. However, there is only one ventilator left in your hospital. You do not have the option to transfer a patient to another hospital.

- You review the charts of the following patients that are under consideration:

- **Presented with several patients in need of the same scarce resource, how do you choose who will be offered the life-saving ventilator?**

Patients 1 and 2

- **Patient #1** - *Admitted at 8:12AM:* 47 y.o. Ms. C has a SOFA score of 9 (signs of moderate organ failure). She self-identifies as an individual with a disability. On a daily basis, she requires a wheelchair for mobility, and a non-invasive ventilator which delivers supplemental oxygen through a mask. She requires total assistance with personal care such as eating, dressing, and bathing. Ms. C is immunocompromised, and vulnerable to severe medical deterioration. She is unmarried, has no children, and serves as a disability activist and writer.

- **Patient #2 -** *Admitted at 8:15AM:* 85 y.o. Mrs. H has a SOFA score of 10 (signs of moderate organ failure). She was diagnosed with Alzheimer's 2 years ago, and has trouble recalling details of her personal history and may wander around. Now as a widow, she has been living in a long-term care home for 3 years. Recently, she has moved to a home closer to her son's house, which is where she contracted Covid-19. Prior to the outbreak, she leaves the residence every Sunday to spend time with her two grandkids.

Patients 3 and 4

- **Patient #3 -** *Admitted at 9:47AM:* 26 y.o. Mr. P has a SOFA score of 13 (signs of severe, multiple organ system failure) but no pre-existing life conditions that would limit life expectancy to less than a year. He is a fourth-year medical student who recently graduated and is planning to begin his internal medicine residency in the summer. He has not been in clinical environments since early March, after the school chose to suspend rotations for all clerks. While Mr. P conformed strictly to social distancing requirements for the first few weeks, he has recently started to become more liberal with public outings and seeing friends. He is recently married, and is expecting his first child.

-

- **Patient #4 -** *Admitted at 11:35AM:* 58 y.o. Mrs. M has a SOFA score of 7 (signs of moderate organ failure), and has a history of one acute myocardial infarction episode and type I diabetes mellitus. She currently works as a nurse in the Covid-19 ICU ward, and has served as an ICU nurse at the hospital for 25 years. She was diligent about the use of PPE, despite there being a shortage and increasing volume of patients. After the pandemic, Mrs. M was planning to retire and spend more time with her daughter and her newborn grandson.

Our NEW (Virtual) Classroom

Artwork by Katerina Mertikas

Planning and using "the board"

- What is it going to look like?

- Shared screen with slides (or live typing)

- Sharing your screen on zoom:
    https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YA6SGQlVmcA

- Ensure you are able to share your screen ahead of time

    – change privacy settings to allow for screen recording

Schiano and Anderson (2017) *Teaching with Cases Online. Harvard Business Publishing*

Setting up your environment

- Check microphone and camera are working

- Set the camera so you are looking into it

- Reduce noise

    – turn off notifications

- Make sure you have light from the front toward your face

- Consider your background

    – make it neutral

Schiano and Anderson (2017) *Teaching with Cases Online. Harvard Business Publishing*

Setting the stage

- set clear expectations
- build community

Schiano and Anderson (2017) *Teaching with Cases Online. Harvard Business Publishing*

Engaging Participants

- early and often
- ask good questions
- set bounds for questions and discussions
- use breakout groups
- call on groups of participants
- be enthusiastic

Schiano and Anderson (2017) *Teaching with Cases Online. Harvard Business Publishing*

24

Responding to Ideas

- A **supportive** and **safe** environment MUST be created to allow students to **feel comfortable participating**

- A **psychologically safe** environment is one where **learners feel comfortable asking questions, taking risks, making mistakes, and asking for help**. They **feel respected,** and that their efforts and skills are **valued** (Edmonson, 1999)

- Encourage critical thinking while **validating** student responses, gently correcting misconceptions, and **avoiding shaming**

Creating Breakout Rooms

1. Click BREAKOUT ROOMS
2. Select the number of rooms you would like to create, and how you would like to assign your participants to those rooms:
   Automatically: Let Zoom split your participants up evenly into each of the rooms.
3. Click CREATE ROOMS
4. Click OPEN ALL ROOMS

https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/206476313-Managing-breakout-rooms

Using Breakout Rooms

- Orient participants before they breakout
  - Make the task clear
  - How much time
- You may visit each room

Schiano and Anderson (2017) *Teaching with Cases Online. Harvard Business Publishing*

Let's Breakout!

Task: Share a wellness tip

- You will have 3 minutes to share a tip with your small group

- Assign one member to share a tip with the large group

Wellness Tips

Artwork by Katerina Mertikas

Extra Help After School

- Erika.abner@utoronto.ca
- Susanna.talarico@sickkids.ca

Thank you!