

Institute of the History of Medicine and Medical Ethics

Professorship for Medical Ethics

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Head of Division

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Research focus

- Clinical Ethics and Ethics Consultation
- Medicine and Human Rights
- Human Rights in Healthcare (EFI project)
- Global Health Ethics and Philosophy of Medicine

Structure of the Professorship

Professorship: 1

Personnel: 14

- Doctors (of Medicine): 3
- Scientists: 8 (thereof funded externally: 5)
- Graduate students: 24

Special structural features

The Professorship for Medical Ethics is responsible for management of the Clinical Ethics Committee at UK Erlangen.

The Chair of the History of Medicine and the Professorship for Medical Ethics constitute the Institute for the History of Medicine and Medical Ethics.

Research

The main areas of research are clinical ethics and ethics consultation, medicine and human rights, and global health ethics and philosophy of medicine. The field of clinical ethics deals with foundational ethical questions concerning the adequate care for patients, motivation of the acts of physicians during the daily routine, and conflict situations in hospital and other medical facilities. Central questions deal with issues at the beginning of life (prenatal diagnosis, pregnancy challenges, neonatology etc.), during a crisis (oncology, genetic advice, psychiatry, transplantation), and at the end of life (advance directives, dementia, terminal care, euthanasia etc.). Some important means of clinical ethics are the analysis of arguments of applied medical ethics and bioethics, advice via ethics committees, and empirical research.

The Professorship is partner for the GK "Opti-Dem" (on Dementia Care), runs the "Forum Medicine and Human Rights" and edits twelve book series.

Clinical Ethics and Ethics Consultation

PI: Prof. Dr. A. Frewer, PD Dr. L. Bergemann, Dr. C. Eibauer, Dr. C. Hack, Dr. D. Rottke

A main field of expertise of the Professorship for Medical Ethics is research concerning clinical ethics consultation whereby a close cooperation with the Clinical Ethics Committee is given. Theoretical groundwork and documentation of ethics consultation and the evaluation of ethical consultation belong to this field of inquiry. Files of patient's advocates are being dealt with in the project "Clinical Ethics from the Patient's Perspective". Further fields of research, particularly using methods of empirical ethics, are end of life conflicts, e.g. projects on ethical consultation, cultures of dying, and advance directives.

As part of this field of research, an annual "Ethics Day" and an intensive course "Clinical Ethics" (BMBF) were organized, the "Yearbook Ethics in Clinics" and the book series "Clinical Ethics" are being edited.



Medicine and Human Rights

PI: Prof. Dr. A. Frewer, PD Dr. L. Bergemann, Dr. M. Mylius, PD Dr. M. Schmidhuber

This field of research bears on problems of determining the place of human dignity and human rights in the area of medical and bioethical controversy. The possibilities and limits of a rights-based medical ethics and bioethics are considered from a theoretical perspective and several dimensions of the concepts of human dignity and human rights are studied in this context. In a practical vein, this area of research involves questions of medical investigation and the documentation of human rights violations, application of the Istanbul Protocol of the United Nations to document torture, but also the participation of physicians in human rights violations.

Not least of all, it inquires into the therapy and "prophylaxis" of human rights violations, such as wartime sexual violence, torture, recruitment of children as soldiers, and female genital mutilation. In connection with this area of research, a public lecture series is being organized and three academic book series are being edited.

Human Rights in Healthcare (EFI Project)

PI: Prof. Dr. A. Frewer, PD Dr. L. Bergemann, PD Dr. M. Schmidhuber, S. Klotz

The Emerging Fields Project "Human Rights in Healthcare" (compare own report) focuses on highly relevant issues in the intersection of human rights, medicine, and medical ethics. The project deals with conflicting claims to receive such support for personal autonomy in healthcare. The general purpose is to better understand the implicit criteria which guide decisions taken in clinical practice and to develop normative criteria based on human rights and medical ethics. Practical examples are studied intensively with issues of dialysis, transplantation, new conflicts arising from international patient mobility, "health literacy" education, contributions to "health-empowerment" of vulnerable groups and end-of-life-questions. Beyond raising public awareness on complicated and important issues, the aspiration is to provide practical orientation based on ethical principles, internationally binding human rights' norms, and professional experience in the field. The project develops an intensive cooperation between researchers from different disciplines, including medicine, human rights, ethics, law, philosophy, social sciences, political science, and literature studies.



Global Health Ethics and Philosophy of Medicine

PI: Prof. Dr. A. Frewer, Dr. R. Erices, Dr. C. Herler, PD Dr. A. Reis, PD Dr. M. Schmidhuber

This field deals with questions concerning the notion "disease" and human aging, moral evaluations of various aspects of human enhancement, preimplantation diagnosis, and deep brain stimulation.

In this context, two academic book series are being edited.



Teaching

The Professorship for Medical Ethics contributes with obligatory and facultative subjects to the education of the students. Special units are offered within the GK "OptiDem" (on Dementia Care) and the interdisciplinary seminars "Q2" and "Q13" together with the Institute for Biomedicine of Aging. The seminars on "Ethical Communicative Competencies" (with role plays for students and simulated patients, some inter-professional) deserve to be mentioned particularly.

This broad offer on the complex ethical questions (modules: Breaking bad news, Speaking about death and dying, Intercultural communication, Acting at borders – Coping with dementia, Communicative Competencies for errors in medicine) is unique at medical faculties in Germany.

Prof. Dr. A. Frewer is Senior Advisory Consultant of the World Health Organization (WHO).

Bachelor's and Master's theses and medical or philosophical dissertations as well as "Habilitation"/PhD studies are supervised.

Selected publications

Frewer A, Bergemann L, Hack C, Ulrich HG. (Hrsg.) Die kosmopolitische Klinik. Globalisierung und kultursensible Medizin. Jahrbuch Ethik in der Klinik (JEK), Band 10. Würzburg, 2017

Klotz S, Bielefeldt H, Schmidhuber M, Frewer A. (Eds.) Healthcare as a Human Rights Issue. Normative Profile, Conflicts and Implementation. Bielefeld, 2017

Schmidhuber M, Bergemann L, Frewer A. (Eds.) Ethical Dimensions of International Dementia Plans. New Strategies for Human Rights. Global Health, Ethics and Human Rights, Vol. 3. Würzburg, 2017

Bergemann L, Frewer A. (Hrsg.) Vulnerabilität und Autonomie in der Medizin. Menschenrechte – Ethik – Empowerment. Bielefeld, 2018

Erices R, Frewer A, Gumz A. The role of the State Security Service (Stasi) in the context of international clinical trials conducted by western pharmaceutical companies in Eastern Germany (1961-1990). PLoS One. 2018 Apr 2;13(4):e0195017

Frewer A, Bergemann L, Hack C. (Hrsg.) Kliniken unter Geschwindigkeitsdruck versus „Slow Care“? Zur Ethik von Zeit und Achtsamkeit in der Medizin. In: Jahrbuch Ethik in der Klinik (JEK), Band 11. Würzburg, 2018: 9-18

International cooperations

Prof. Dr. J. D. Moreno, Department of Medical Ethics and Health Policy, University of Pennsylvania: USA

PD Dr. A. Reis, Department of Global Health Ethics, World Health Organization, Geneva: Switzerland

Prof. U. Schmidt, PhD., Centre for the History of Medicine, Ethics and Medical Humanities, University of Kent, Canterbury: UK

