

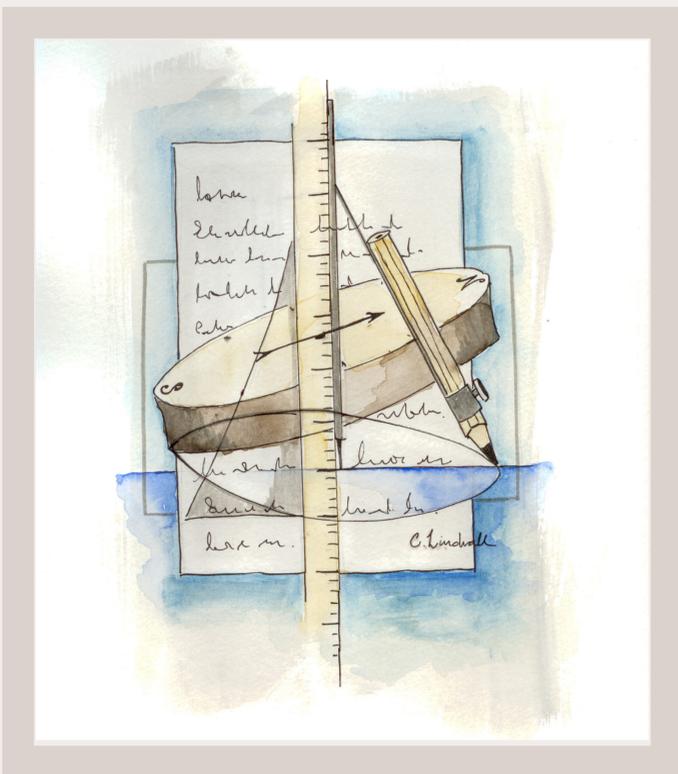
Ethics in practice

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How should ethical issues and challenges be addressed in the best way in clinical practice?

Aim

The aims of this poster is to show how ethical issues are dealt with at the Karolinska University Hospital and how tools are developed to address ethical challenges in clinical practice.



Tools for practical ethics have been developed: an ethics survey, an ethics manual, a hospital ethics policy and a model for ethical analysis.

The model for ethical analysis includes:

1. Identify the ethical problem
2. Gather relevant facts
3. Identify actors/stakeholders
4. Identify their interests
5. Figure out different options for action
6. Assess the short-term and long-term effects
7. Make a balanced choice and justify your choice in relation to ethical principles.



We have an organisation based on networking and interacting at all levels

Centrally we have an ethics committee (1993), and an ethics coordinator (1997). Each ward has 1-2 ethics agents (1999) and every department appoints an ethics representative (2006). These people meet regularly for experience sharing, discussions and evaluation.

Ethics education and training

Introduction courses in clinical ethics.
Training in ethical analysis.

Ethics discussion forum

The hospital staff is regularly invited to meetings for discussion on current ethical problems.

Guidance and support- Ethics consultations

(by phone, e-mail and in the workplace) are offered in difficult situations/cases
- Local ethical guidelines: including treatment and care for undocumented migrants, sexual abuse of patients, documentation of the decision to refrain from or limit treatment at the end of life.

An annual report of ethical activities and support is done within the hospital and delivered both to the hospital and to the County Council management teams.

Conclusion

An organisation for clinical ethics support at all levels and an ongoing development of tools that can be used by all co-workers when facing ethical challenges seems to be a good way to address ethical issues in clinical practice at the Karolinska University Hospital