Ethical Analysis

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Ethical Analysis

Topics to be covered
- Introduction to ethics
- Framework for ethical analysis
- Supplementing the framework
Section A

Introduction to Ethics
Normative Ethical Theory

- Person(s)
- Actions
- Consequences
Normative Ethical Theory

- Virtue theory
- Consequentialist theory
- Non-consequentialist theory
Virtue Theory (Aristotle)

- Focus on person
- Cultivation of virtuous traits
Virtue Theory (Aristotle)

“A just person—that is a person with the virtue of fairness—not only has the disposition to act fairly, but when so acting has a morally appropriate desire to do so. The person characteristically has a moral concern and reservation about acting in a way that would be unfair (p. 214).”

Virtue Theory (Aristotle)

- Practical virtue
Consequentialism
(John Stuart Mill)

- Focus on consequences of action(s)
  - Action(s) are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the opposite of happiness
- Utilitarian

Image Source: www.philosophypages.com
Consequentialism (John Stuart Mill)

- Maximizing principle
- Impersonal perspective
Consequentialism
(John Stuart Mill)

- Utility can conflict with other values
  - HIV vaccine example
Non-Consequentialism (Immanuel Kant)

- Deontologic
- Focus on action(s) taken
- Motive to act

Image Source: www.artemis.austincollege.edu
Non-Consequentialism (Immanuel Kant)

- Categorical imperative
- Respect for persons
  - Individuals should not be treated simply as means to an end
Section B

Framework for Ethical Analysis
Framework for Ethical Analysis

Belmont Report (1978)

- Clinical practice vs. research
- Three principles
  1. Beneficence
  2. Respect for Persons
  3. Justice
Beneficence

- Moral requirements
  - Do no harm
  - Maximize benefits/ minimize harms
Beneficence

- Practical applications
  - Study design
  - Risk/benefit ratio
Respect for Persons

- Moral requirements
  - Acknowledge autonomy
  - Protect those with diminished autonomy
Respect for Persons

Practical Applications

- Informed consent
  1. Information
  2. Comprehension
  3. Voluntariness

Continued
Respect for Persons

Practical Applications

- Informational privacy and confidentiality
  - Primary data collection
  - Secondary data analysis
Justice

- Moral requirement
  - Equals should be treated equally
  - To each an equal share
  - To each according to effort
  - To each according to societal contribution
  - To each person according to merit
Justice

Practical Applications

- Fair procedures for selection of study subjects
  - Individual
  - Social
- Gender/minority equity
Supplementing Framework

- Casuist perspective (Jonsen and Toulmin)
- Relationship paradigm (King, Henderson, Stein)
Supplementing Framework

**Principlist Paradigm**
- Balancing principles
- Ethical universalism
- Atomistic focus

**Relationship Paradigm**
- Layering of relevant relationships
- Context-based
- Cross-cutting issues
- Narrative focus
- Continuity
- Change
Summary

- Goal—create thoughtful principlists