

Ethical and legal implications for disaster management



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Session Long: Ethical and Legal Implications for Disaster Management

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Implications in Disaster Management Ethical and Legal Implications for

Disaster Management With a dramatic increase in the number of disasters,

both natural and man-made, over the past few years and hence increased

the role of disaster risk mitigation policies many fold. Timely and effective

disaster response is fundamental to ensure that disaster struck population

and areas receive aid and resources so as to assist them to return to “

normality”. Medical aid is the central form of assistance that first responders

to disasters provide, as inhabitants recuperating from the after effects of the

disaster have high vulnerability to health related risks. Because of the

primary importance of medical responders in disasters, it is key to discuss

and consider the legal and ethical issues associated with the stakeholders

involved in disaster response and recovery work (Ashton). Main Ethical and

Legal Issues: Priority setting: Triage at Disaster Scenes In the context of

disaster management, triage signifies the way by which treatment priorities

are set (UNDP). It is the process for classifying disaster victims in order to

determine who should receive treatment first but it is a argumentative topic

and has both legal and ethical implications - if all victims have the same

legal (human) rights to healthcare then how can the response team justify

the tagging of certain people as having higher urgency for aid than others?

Therefore, a lot of thought has gone into considering the ethics of triage.

Declaring a State of Emergency Even though, there are defined the norms of

declaring a “ state of emergency” such as that by The Geneva Centre for the

Democratic Control of Armed Forces, the notion of ‘ State of Emergency’ is

controversial subject with respect to legal issues and ethics as many people

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believe that the powers given to governments under “ emergency rules” legislation diminish civil liberties and hence have the potentially lead to abuses of power by the government or disaster response teams (Soliman and Rogge). Questions have also arisen around the legitimacy of ‘ state of emergency’ acts in cases of disasters particularly natural catastrophes. Data Protection Data Protection is a huge issue in medical domain especially related to patient confidentiality and physician oath of integrity. There are a number of evolved ethics and legal procedures set for normal practices. However, in case of disaster scenarios, an abundance of data will be generated regarding event’s victims or patients. Because of the fact that there is no normal clinical settings or structured medical staff response, ideally extra care has to be made with respect to data protection and procession. Hence, disaster situations could also trigger unique moral dilemmas concerning data protection. Works Cited UNDP. " Disaster Management Ethics." 1997. Ashton, Holly. " Legal and Ethical Aspects of First Medical Response to Disasters – Background Paper ." Centre for Science, Society and Citizenship , 2008. Soliman, Hussein H. and Mary E. Rogge. " Ethical Considerations in Disaster Services: A Social Work Perspective ." Electronic Journal of Social Work (n. d.): 1-7.