

Human Rights and Ethics in Psychology and Physiotherapy

Roth Roswith, University of Graz, Austria, Sturm Andrea, Interuniversity College Seggau, Austria, Ian Edwards, Caroline Fryer, School of Health Sciences, University of South Australia

Human right norms are meant to guide the actions of governments

Ethics in health care much more broadly encompass concern for the specific actions, and relationships of individual health workers, researchers, and organizations

Morality could be understood as an individual person's approach to questions of right/wrong or good/bad

Morals differ between individuals and cultures
The most referenced model for morals is

Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Development

Ethical reasoning is the systematic reflection on different moral positions and the ability to assess and develop ethical arguments

Ethical Dilemmas are relational situations, filled with ambivalence, where the psychologist/physiotherapist has to choose between action alternatives that will have negative consequences for the patient

Ethic rules in psychology are provided by **APA** General Principles, in physiotherapy by **WCPT**

Education: Practitioners need a strong **foundation** in ethics theory and reasoning

Background knowledge about the population they serve

Reflection skills

Support to develop courage to act as moral agents

Openness for learning from individual encounters and transforming beliefs

Aim: Are Code of Ethics and Ethic Reasoning included in the basic education of physiotherapists?

Sample: 1.212 participants, 815 (67.2%) females, 389 (32.1%) males, 8 (0.7%) diverse from 94 countries around the world

Results

More physiotherapists learned about **ethic codes** in basic education (73.6%) than about **ethical decision making** (48%)

Only 17.4% know in which framework they learned about these aspects

Comparing the WCPT regions, about 93% in the N American region, 87% in Africa, 76% in Asia, 67% in S America and 64% in Europe learned about ethic codes, 76% in N America, 62% in Africa, 60% in S America, 45% in Asia, 39% in Europe about ethical decision making

44.8% learned about both aspects: **ethic codes and ethical decision making**

14.6% learned **nothing about ethics**

5.2% don't know whether they learned about it or not

Physiotherapists are not well prepared for ethical complexity of workplaces. They need both: **knowledge and skills** to cope with the social dimensions of ethical practice

Recommendations:

We have to strengthen ethical knowledge and skills in basic education