

What Do Students Perceive as Ethical Problems? A Comparative Study of Dutch and Indonesian Medical Students in Clinical Training

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Abstract	<p>Previous studies show that medical students in clinical training face ethical problems that are not often discussed in the literature. In order to make teaching timely and relevant for them, it is important to understand what medical students perceive as ethical problems, as various factors may influence their perception, including cultural differences and working environment. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore students' perceptions of what an ethical problem is, during their clinical training in the hospital, and compare the results from two different countries. We observed a total of eighteen ethics group discussions and interviewed fifteen medical students at two medical schools, in Indonesia and the Netherlands. Data were interpreted and analyzed using content analysis. We found that students in both settings encounter problems which are closer to their daily work and responsibilities as medical students and perceive these problems as ethical problems. Indonesian students perceived substandard care and inequity in healthcare as ethical problems, while Dutch students perceived that cases which are not matters of life and death are less worthy to discuss. Our study suggests that there might be a gap between ethical problems that are discussed in class with teachers, and problems that students actually encounter in practice. Teachers should be aware of the everyday situations in clinical training which may be perceived by students as ethically problematic and should acknowledge and discuss these ethical problems with students as part of the learning processes in ethics education.</p>
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