

In this feature, our team provides you with an overview of the most recent publications in the field of bioethics, with a particular focus on contributions coming from (or having relevance for) Switzerland.

Buona lettura! Bonne lecture ! Viel Spass beim Lesen! Enjoy the reading!

The editors: Andrea Martani, and Maddalena Favaretto.

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THEORETICAL BIOETHICS

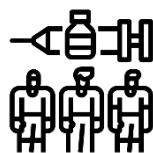


“The concept of social dignity as a yardstick to delimit ethical use of robotic assistance in the care of older persons”

Given the increasing need of care related to age, the idea of delegating certain care duties to robots is more and more often discussed in Switzerland and internationally. But what should be the most appropriate criterion to decide whether giving way to robot care is ethically acceptable? In their article, Felber and colleagues suggest to use the concept of social dignity. The authors present the feature of social dignity and compare it with other concepts often used to guide ethical reasoning in this respect (e.g. autonomy, or wellbeing).

Felber, N.A., Pageau, F., McLean, A. *et al.* The concept of social dignity as a yardstick to delimit ethical use of robotic assistance in the care of older persons. *Med Health Care and Philos* (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11019-021-10054-z>

PUBLIC HEALTH ETHICS



“General public's view on opt-in, opt-out, and mandated choice organ donation policies”

As the demand for organs and the length of waiting lists for transplantation increase, donations rate in Switzerland remains quite low. In a context where the legislator has been active to change donation policies, Swiss citizens will likely be confronted with deciding what is most appropriate in organ donation. In the current study, Kurzen and colleagues illustrate the results of interviews conducted with Swiss citizens from the Canton of Geneva on organ donation policy. Their investigation shows, amongst other things, the focus on an individualistic-based way of addressing the issue of organ donation.

Kurzen J, Clavien C, Hurst S. General public's view on opt-in, opt-out, and mandated choice organ donation policies: a qualitative study involving Swiss French-speaking citizens favourably disposed towards organ donation. *Swiss Med Wkly.* 2021 Nov 6;151:w30037. doi: <https://doi.org/10.4414/smw.2021.w30037>.

CLINICAL ETHICS



“Preventing moral conflicts in patient care: Insights from a mixed-methods study with clinical experts?”

Schürmann and colleagues shed some lights on the temporal aspect of clinical ethics in a study involving questionnaire and semi-structured interviews with healthcare professionals (HPs) from two Swiss hospitals. On top of investigating HPs’ conception of ethics, the authors also analyse their views on which moral problems occur more frequently, and which risk factors and early indicators are related to them. Finally, the authors also discuss HPs’ perspectives on what preventive ethics measures are useful for the early detection and solution of moral problems.

Schürmann J, Vaitaityte G, Reiter-Theil S. Preventing moral conflicts in patient care: Insights from a mixed-methods study with clinical experts. *Clinical Ethics*. November 2021.

doi:[10.1177/14777509211057254](https://doi.org/10.1177/14777509211057254)

“Informed consent in psychotherapy: a survey on attitudes among psychotherapists in Switzerland”

In the field of psychotherapy there is a lot of debate on how to appropriately implement informed consent (IC) practices in the therapeutic relation. The study by Eberle and colleagues explores this relevant topic by discussing the results of a questionnaire carried out with Swiss psychotherapists on attitudes towards IC. Findings include the fact that discussing confidentiality and fostering self-determination were considered very important components of IC. At the same time, the authors point out at some interesting differences related to IC depending on the sector (in-patient vs out-patient) and treated group (e.g. youth/children vs adults).

Eberle, K., grosse Holtforth, M., Inderbinen, M. *et al.* Informed consent in psychotherapy: a survey on attitudes among psychotherapists in Switzerland. *BMC Med Ethics* **22**, 150 (2021).

<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12910-021-00718-z>

RESEARCH ETHICS



“The Challenges of Big Data for Research Ethics Committees: A Qualitative Swiss Study”

In Switzerland Cantonal Ethics Committees (CEC) have the legal role of providing ethics review of research involving human subject, biological sample or medical data. But are they equipped to evaluate new research projects favoured by the Big Data phenomenon? The article by Ferretti and colleagues tackles this topic by reporting the results of an interview study they conducted with CEC members. In their discussion, the authors reflect on how ethics review of big data projects can be improved.

Ferretti A, Ienca M, Velarde MR, Hurst S, Vayena E. The Challenges of Big Data for Research Ethics Committees: A Qualitative Swiss Study. *Journal of Empirical Research on Human Research Ethics*.

November 2021. doi:[10.1177/15562646211053538](https://doi.org/10.1177/15562646211053538)