Qualitative Evaluation in Health Care

*Ethical considerations*

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10:00-11:00 *(Sweden, Stockholm time)*

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Lecture readings

1. It is not necessary to read beforehand but please bring to the lecture
   American Evaluation Association’s guiding principals for evaluators


   Document 1: MRC ethics


2. Please prepare this for the written exam
   American Evaluation Association’s guiding principals for evaluators

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Lecture outline

1. Ethical considerations in any intervention/empirical research
   • Examples from your experience

2. Reporting as an evaluation research concern

3. Ethics in low income settings

4. Solving practical examples

5. American Evaluation Association

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The learning objectives are:

- To emphasise the importance of ethical evaluation research
- To review and apply the rules of ethical evaluation research to case studies
- To rethink the ethical issues in low-income contexts

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Empirical/Developing intervention research

Two principles

1. Upholding the well-being of the participant always take precedence over research interest.

Example 1
You are exploring the adherence behaviour of HIV patients. The participant claims he is on medication but the health facility says this is not the case. Continue or terminate his participation?

Example 2
The participant tells you about child abuse in the neighbourhood. What is your responsibility?

Example 2
It is rain season; you are to interview the participant many times and he/she is without rain protection: Buy or not buying?

2. Research is ethically acceptable only if it relies on valid scientific methods.

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Towards an *Ethical Considerations* template

Numerous guidelines

- The Helsinki Declaration (adopted 1964; currently Version 7),
- WHO
- Institutional Ethic Committees (See *Doc 1: MRC’s Ethics*)

Realities in low-income settings

- The status and power that researchers hold and how to mitigate it during recruitment; the “Yes doctor ... Yes sister” phenomenon.
  - Is it ethical to pay participants?
  - How would you protect participants’ privacy and confidentiality when using an interpreter?

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Towards an *Ethical Considerations* template

1. Are there different issues at stake for evaluation research compared to empirical research or RCTs testing an intervention?

   ✓ The issue of reporting your findings (Buchanan et al., 2011)

*Example 1:*

The participant shares information but is concerned that he/she will be identified despite anonymising the data and that it will jeopardise his/her position. Your brief from was to conduct the evaluation in order to improve the programme, and the information will definitely improve the programme. What will you do?
Towards an *Ethical Considerations* template

1. The issue of reporting your findings
   
   *Example 2*
   
   “... the final version of the report meant sacrificing the integrity of the evaluation and therefore its quality.” (Rodríguez-Bilella, 2012, p. 6).

2. How is *confidentiality* translated into practice?
Towards an *Ethical Considerations* template

American Evaluation Association: Guidelines

*Systematic inquiry: Point 2 and 3*

*Competence: Point 3*

*Integrity/Honesty: Point 1 and 3*

*Respect for people: Point 3*

*Responsibilities for general and public welfare: Point 3*

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Towards an *Ethical Considerations* template

**Recommendations**

- Sound methods will go a long way in conducting ethical evaluations.
- Initiating a discussion on *Ethics* with the commissioning agency is your responsibility.
- Agree on how to deal with negative findings/information and how it will be reflected in the final report.
  - Buy-in that negative findings are as important as positive findings
- Document all your actions in dealing with an ethical dilemma.

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Recommended readings
