



## A novel approach for enhancing ethics education

### What is this Research About?

Accrediting bodies of medical schools now recognize that ethics instruction is an integral part of medical education. However, recent studies report a lack of funding for ethics instruction in over 50% of U.S. medical schools, combined with a general lack of consensus of what an ethics curriculum should look like. Faculty of the Sanford USD School of Medicine (SSOM) believe that medical students require training in ethical decision-making to prepare them for clinical practice. The SSOM incorporated a longitudinal integrated ethics program into the curriculum. This study describes the curriculum and reflects on student responses.

### What did the Researchers Do?

The SSOM longitudinal integrated ethics program includes in person and online instruction as well as an optional Bioethics Certificate, taught over 4 years. The program builds on seminars delivered in the first year and includes a model for decision-making and discussion of clinical scenarios. After running the program for 3 full academic cycles, two faculty selected comments made by students on discussion boards using accepted qualitative methodologies as typical student narrative responses to teaching. The researchers used a framework in selecting quotations that would 'shed light on themes, concerns, and concepts that seemed relevant and meaningful to students.'

### What did the Researchers Find?

The researchers found that the integrated ethics program seemed to help students expand from seeing the patient in just the context of their illness to seeing them not only in the context of the patient's life, but also from the perspective of what the clinician and the medical profession bring to the ethical situation. Students' comments suggested that the program may help medical students prepare to engage in ethical decision making in their professional career.

# SoTL

## Snapshot

A synopsis of a scholarship of teaching and learning journal article

### ➔ How to Implement this Research in Your Classroom

The study described a novel ethics program integrated into all years of the curriculum at one U.S. medical school. The researchers analyzed representative student responses and concluded that the program seems helpful in preparing medical students to recognize the ethics that permeate medicine and how to set about navigating them through their career. Veterinary ethics could be integrated into the curriculum in a similar way, allowing students to integrate it into their learning at all stages, reinforcing how it is ever-present in all veterinary decision-making.

### ➔ Citation

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### ➔ Keywords

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