



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
MELBOURNE

Melbourne  
Clinical Ethics Group



**Clinical ethics  
consultancy services**

## What are the benefits of clinical ethics?

Clinical ethics is about making good decisions in ethically complex situations. Clinical ethics discussions focus on individual patient care situations, guided by ethical concepts and principles. A guided clinical ethics discussion can be helpful in clinical situations of conflicting views or uncertainty about the best way forward for a patient. Having a clinical ethics service is beneficial for an organisation. Clinical ethics consultations and discussions help clinicians and patients to recognise, to better understand and to more consistently make good ethical decisions. Research shows that clinical ethics:

- Decreases moral distress in staff, and associated burn out and staff attrition<sup>1</sup>
- Introduces productive and collaborative models conflict management. In healthcare<sup>2,3</sup>
- Assists clinicians to identify and analyse ethical complexity<sup>1</sup>
- Establishes a safe space to discuss high stakes, and ethically and emotionally challenging cases<sup>1,2</sup>
- Improves the quality of health care outcomes.<sup>4</sup>

## What is the Melbourne Clinical Ethics Group?

The Melbourne Clinical Ethics Group (MCEG) comprises three experienced clinical ethicists from the University of Melbourne, who all have experience working with major tertiary public hospitals in Melbourne.

The MCEG was formed to be a central hub of clinical ethics expertise, and a consultation service for individual clinicians and health organisations and services who do not have their own embedded clinical ethicists. MCEG's consultancy services are committed to being deliberative (seeking and being respectful of diverse perspectives), collaborative, accessible to individual clinicians and organisations, and oriented to organisational values.

## What clinical ethics consultancy services does the MCEG provide?

Within Victoria and nationally, the MCEG is available to provide:

- Clinical ethics consultations, advice and de-briefs (with individual clinicians, departments or multidisciplinary teams)
- Clinical ethics education and training
- Clinical ethics policy advice.

## MCEG Consultation Services and Costs

The base rate for a clinical ethicist is \$350 per hour. Some of the MCEG services require 2 ethicists working together. Services which require travel and accommodation, will have additional costs, calculated on the basis of location.

### Clinical Ethics Consultation \$2100

The ethics case consultation process helps clinicians to ensure that they have carefully and thoroughly considered all moral aspects of cases. In the uncommon situations where clinicians feel they cannot fully achieve what they believe to be the best outcome for a patient, ethics consultations and discussion can assist in alleviating and giving staff tools to address moral distress.

#### Breakdown of costs for a standard clinical ethics consultation

2 hours preparation	\$700
Clinical ethics discussion (60-90 mins) (two ethicists required)	\$700
2 hours to provide written report/ advice	\$700

### Clinical Ethics De-brief \$1000

A clinical ethics de-brief involves an ethicist leading and facilitating a discussion about a past ethics challenge. The goal is to assist staff to process, reflect on and address moral distress arising from a past experience or to identify and analyse ethical dimensions of the experience. A standard ethics debrief does not involve a written report. If required, a written report can be provided at an additional cost of \$350.

### Clinical Ethics Education and Training \$2500 - \$4000

Half day (4 hour) Clinical Ethics Training Module	\$2500
Full day Clinical Ethics Training Module	\$4000

Modules are tailored for groups from 5 to 25 people, and include access to written materials.

### Clinical Ethics Policy Advice \$350 per hour

The MCEG is available to provide policy advice to health services, health professional bodies and government, both state and federal. Policy areas include: advance directives for patients, withdrawal and withholding of life-sustaining medical treatment, etc.

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1. Laura Guidry-Grimes, Marika Warren, Hannah I. Lipman, Kelly Kent, Kaarkuzhali Babu Krishnamurthy, Arlene M. Davis, Thomas May, Marycon Chin Jiro, and Jane Jankowski, "Clarifying a Clinical Ethics Service's Value, the Visible and the Hidden," *The Journal of Clinical Ethics* 30, no. 3 (Fall 2019): 251-61.
  2. Newson, A. The value of Clinical Ethics Support in Australian Healthcare. *MJA* 202 (11) 15 June 2015
  3. McDougall, R, Delany C and Gillam, L "Collaboration in clinical ethics consultation: a method for achieving "balanced accountability"." *The American Journal of Bioethics* 14.6 (2014): 47-48.
  4. Sine, David M., and Virginia A. Sharpe. "Ethics, risk, and patient-centered care: How collaboration between clinical ethicists and risk management leads to respectful patient care." *Journal of Healthcare Risk Management* 31.1 (2011): 32-37.

## Principal ethicists



### **Professor Lynn Gillam**

BA(Hons), MA (Oxon) and bioethics (PhD)

Professor Gillam is an experienced clinical ethicist, trained in philosophy and bioethics (PhD). She is a professor in the Centre for Health Equity in the Melbourne School of Population and Global Health, at the University of Melbourne. Lynn is also the Academic Director of the Children's Bioethics Centre at the Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne. At RCH, Lynn has been involved in over 250 ethics consultations since 2005. She was awarded the RCH Chairman's Medal in 2018, in recognition of this work.

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### **Professor Clare Delany**

BAppSc (Physio), M Hlth and Med Law, M Physio, PhD

Professor Delany is a clinical ethicist at the Children's Bioethics Centre at the Royal Children's Hospital and a consultant clinical ethicist at Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre in Melbourne. In the Department of Medical Education, Melbourne Medical School, Clare works closely with health professionals from a variety of disciplines to conduct education research relevant to their clinical contexts. Clare is the lead of the Clinical Ethics Stream of the Australian Association of Bioethics and Health Law.

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### **Dr Rosalind McDougall**

BSc, BA(Hons), BPhil, PhD

Dr McDougall has been involved in providing clinical ethics support in hospitals since 2008, and co-founded the Australasian Clinical Ethics Network. Based at the School of Population and Global Health at the University of Melbourne, Rosalind's research and teaching focuses on the ethical challenges faced by health professionals. Her background is in philosophy and qualitative research, and she brings these ideas and approaches to the interdisciplinary analysis of issues in patient care. She has published widely in the fields of clinical ethics and reproductive ethics.

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## Enquiries

For further details on the services offered by the Melbourne Clinical Ethics Group or to book our services please email Professor Clare Delany, [c.delany@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:c.delany@unimelb.edu.au).

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