

Session	Session 10 Paper C
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Title of presentation	Do approaches to the training and supervision of researchers promote or constrain ethical research practice in humanitarian settings?
Abstract	<p>Research conducted in humanitarian emergencies must adhere to systems of research ethics oversight. Typically senior researchers responsible for research governance and the ethical integrity of a study design are the ones who engage with procedural research ethics oversight. Once approved by the ethical review board these procedures are then applied in the field by front-line researchers who are usually not involved in their development. Therefore, an important question is: how are these procedures and the ethical principles that underpin them shared with, and applied by, research assistants in the field?</p> <p>This presentation will explore this question by sharing findings from a multi-country qualitative study that explored researchers' views of research ethics in post-conflict mental health research. Drawing upon narratives that described researcher training and supervision, I argue that these often adopted a proceduralist approach to ethics that focused on auditable ethical outputs such as the informed consent form. These will be contrasted with researchers' descriptions of ethical considerations that arose during research conduct and how these were responded to.</p> <p>Findings from this empirical study raise questions about approaches to "ethics" in humanitarian mental health research training and supervision. It suggests a focus upon the visible and auditable, with less attention paid to the in-person interactions that occur when operationalising ethics to research practice. Given that in humanitarian settings researchers often work in isolation under challenging circumstances, including experiencing ethical dilemmas, this presentation argues for a broader approach to "ethics" that embraces ethically important moments beyond those addressed through procedural ethical processes.</p>
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