

JOHANN WOLFGANG GOETHE  
UNIVERSITÄT  
FRANKFURT AM MAIN

**International Conference on Clinical Ethics and Consultation  
2014**

**Frankfurt Network**  
**Ethics in geriatric care**  
Practical experience and theoretical considerations  
from seven years of projekt work

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**ICCEC: Frankfurter Netzwerk Ethik in der Altenpflege**

**Overview**

1. The starting point
2. The history of the project
3. Facts and statistics
4. Theoretical deductions
5. Perspectives

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**Interdisciplinary study by Bockenheimer-Lucius, G.;**  
**Pantel J. et al:** „Psychopharmaceutics supply in senior living homes with long-term care“ (2004/2005)

→ Result I: The use of pharmaceutics in long-term care facilities is often inadequate

→ Result II: There is no discursive space to reflect and discuss ethical problems of everyday practice



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**Interdisciplinary study by Bockenheimer-Lucius, G.;**  
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→ Result II: There is no discursive space to reflect and discuss ethical problems of everyday practice

→ Consequence of result II: Founding of an „ethics project“ for the Frankfurt nursing homes for the elderly



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**Chronological outline of the project**

Phase one:	2006-2007
Phase two:	2007-2008
Phase three:	2008-2013

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**Phase one: The first ethics committee (2006-2007)**

- Founding of the first ethics committee in the „Franziska Schervier Altenpflegeheim“ Frankfurt
- According to the pattern of a clinical ethics committee (interdisciplinarity)
- Responsibility for 190 residents in two facilities
- Tasks: further education in ethical topics, ethics consultation, development of „guidelines“

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**Phase two: The „ethics café“ (2007-2008)**

Establishing the discussion forum

- Low level offer to the employees of the senior living homes
- Discursive space to reflect the every-day practice and its normative implications
- Intended as a supplementary measure to the ethics committee
- The ethics café has become an essential element of the network structure

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**Phase three: The second ethics committee (2008-2013)**

- Founding of the second ethics committee in analogy to the first one
- It has no permanent location but rotates among the participating nursing homes within Frankfurt
- It is constituted by employees of the Frankfurt nursing homes
- It is responsible for approx. 3800 residents in 38 facilities

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**The network structure**

- The benefit of the network structure
- It saves financial and personal resources
- It enables communication between employees of different facilities
- It facilitates training of the care staff and quality control of the committee work

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**Ethics committees**

- The first ethics committee: 78 meetings were held (since 2006) and 34 „case discussions“ has been performed
- The second ethics committee: 55 meetings were held (since 2008) and 9 „case discussions“ has been performed

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**Additional topics**

→ In addition to the case discussions a certain number of topics have been discussed

- Artificial nutrition and PEG-tube
- Living will and custody law
- Handling of "challenging" residents
- Ethical questions of biography work
- Changes of social structure in nursing homes

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**Ethics consultation (2008-2014)**

Ethics consultation / ethical case consulting is a discursive procedure to solve ethically relevant decision-making conflicts.

- 31 consultations have been performed on demand

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**Ethics café (since 2007)**

- The ethics café: 74 sessions of the ethics café took place (average number of participants: approx. 10)
- 48 „case discussions“ have been performed


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	meetings	case discussions
EKA I	78	34
Ethics café	74	48
EKA II	55	9
Ethics consultation	31	31
<b>total</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>122</b>

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**Further education in medical and nursing ethics (since 2007)**

- 17 public events for the employees of the Frankfurt nursing homes (average number of participants: ca. 45)
- 14 events for committee members to enable the committee work

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**Development of Guidelines / Statements**

- Questionnaire on the assessment of ability to consent in „everyday questions“ in the Senior Living Homes
- Guideline for the handling of Living wills
- Guideline for the handling of „challenging“ persons“

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**Theoretical deductions: Differences between nursing home and hospital**

- the range of the discussed cases
- the setting of the ethics consultation

Consequently

- it is to be reconstructed theroretically in a different way and
- it needs a specific procedure for ethics consultation

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**Theoretical reconstruction**

→ The specific normative questions of nursing homes emerge out of the field of tension between privacy and institutional care

Theoretical reference point: total institution (Goffman)

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**Specific procedure for ethics consultation**

→ Usual procedures are inappropriate

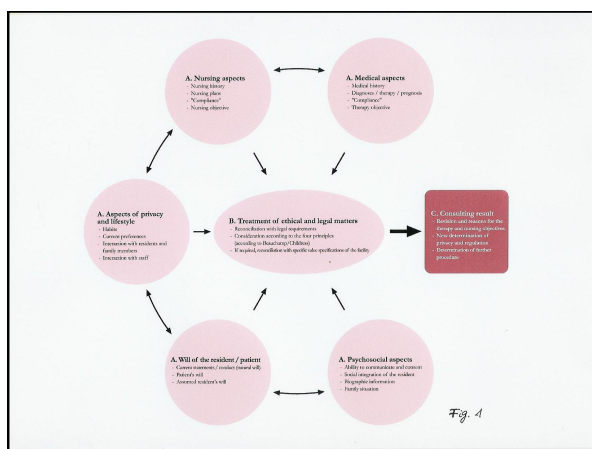
- often very complex
- strongly orientated to medical aspects
- Lacking aspects of privacy and lifestyle

→ Procedure of ethics consultation for geriatric care

- Simple structure
- Privacy and lifestyle as major question

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**Phase four (2014)**  
Reorganisation of the organisational framework

- Delegation of „ethics commissioner“
- Further education of the commissioners to „ethics consultants“ in accordance to the standards of the „Akademie für Ethik in der Medizin“
- More organisational and financial responsibility of the care facilities

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**The experiences of the project work led to the publication:**  
Bockenheimer-Lucius / Dansou / Sauer  
Das Ethikkomitee im Altenpflegeheim.  
Theoretische Grundlagen und praktische Konzeption, Frankfurt am Main 2012



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**Thank you very much!**  
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