HELSINKI IN THE AGE OF HUMAN RIGHTS

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Thinking ahead – The future of the Declaration of Helsinki
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Aurora Plomer, BA, MA, LLB, PhD
Professor of Law & Bioethics
Director SIBLE (Sheffield Institute of Biotechnology Law and Ethics)
University of Sheffield
A.Plomer@sheffield.ac.uk
Aims

- Analyze the relationship between the Declaration of Helsinki and UNESCO’s Bioethics Declaration (UBD)
- Situate UBD in the wider dual international human rights framework of the ICCPR & ICESCR
- Show that DoH is consistent with and a necessary complement to human rights instruments.
Hierarchy of Human Rights in International Law

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)

ICCPR (1966)

ICESCR (1966)

UNESCO BIOETHICS DECLARATION
Strict v. Progressive Obligations

Article 7
ICCPR
- Article 5 UBD
- Article 6 UBD

Article 15
ICESCR
- Article 14 UBD
- Article 15 UBD

Article 15

1. The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone:
   - (a) To take part in cultural life;
   - (b) To enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications;
   - (c) To benefit from the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.
Article 2

1. Each State Party to the present Covenant undertakes to take steps, individually and through international assistance and co-operation, especially economic and technical, to the maximum of its available resources, with a view to achieving progressively the full realization of the rights recognized in the present Covenant by all appropriate means, including particularly the adoption of legislative measures.
Art. 15 implications & Helsinki

- Design and conduct trials should be sensitive to local context and needs (DoH - 17)
- The use of placebos may be consistent with human rights (DoH – 32)
- Rights to benefit-haring (DoH -33)
Human Rights & Ethical Codes

- The UNESCO Declaration is not intended to displace and cannot replace ethical codes conduct such as the Declaration of Helsinki – specifically noted in the Preamble to the Declaration.
- Like other human rights texts UNESCO’s Declaration aims to provide a ‘universal framework of principles to guide States’. The normative implications of these principles and their detailed implementation must be developed separately (by States).
- The Declaration of Helsinki 2008 has a critical and complementary role to play in the detailed elaboration of ethical guidance to ensure respect for human rights.
- Collaboration and dialogue between UN agencies, States, professional organizations and civil society is crucial to promote and enhance respect for human rights.
Thank You