

Virtual Workshop

ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL

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In clinical practice one size does not fit all; clinical quality standards and reimbursement schemes are general, but patients are different. The 'best for the patient' – *aegroti salus suprema lex*¹ – depends on the medical status as well as the value status of the patient. In pluralistic societies in particular, citizens have different preferences and understandings of qualities and goals of life, as Galen said '*non homo universalis curatur, set unus quique nostrum*²'.

We are using a checklist approach to include the value status into the medical status of a patient, i.e. integrating differential ethics into differential diagnosis. The Bochum Protocol, developed in 1986 by Hans-Martin Sass and Herbert Viefhues at the Bochum Center for Medical Ethics and since translated into many languages, is such a checklist, asking: 'What do we know about the value-and wish status of the patient? How does the patient feel about intensive, palliative or reanimation therapy? How far can the patient be a partner in clinical decision-making? Who else can speak for the patient? Does the patient consent to the course of treatment? Are there differences in judgment between the physician, the patient, the team and the family? How can those conflicts be solved? How will principles of trust, truthfulness, mutual respect and confidentiality be protected?

In this workshop, the clinical-ethics checklist model will be introduced in a Socratic and a Morenian training methods to reduce clinical conflicts and to improve patient-oriented care among health care providers, patients and their families. It will be demonstrated how the clinical-ethical checklist – a valuable tool in the physician's pocket as useful as the stethoscope - can be used prospectively by the treatment team, retrospectively by clinical ethics committees and in educational settings using case studies for improving professional communication and cooperation on the clinical ward.

¹ *'the good of the patient is the highest order'*

² *'we do not cure a universal person, but this special one, unique one, our patient'*