

ETHICAL ASPECTS IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH RESEARCH

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At the moment in the Northern societies there is a huge change on-going not only in climate, ecosystems, but also in socio-economic and cultural issues. Environmental research is always multidisciplinary and thus we need to consider research ethics also from multidisciplinary point of view. Our aim is to find good practices in a multidisciplinary approach. This is challenging because different research fields/disciplines have their own paradigms, methodologies, and research traditions. By listening, understanding, and finally working together we can understand more deeply the complexity of environmental health problems. To start our collaboration it is important first to analyze the existing literature and review the views of different disciplines.

Basic concepts in good research ethics are always the same: pursue of truth, scientifically sound research methodologies and respect for research participants and collaborators. Additional recognized ethical aspects in environmental health research are global: inequality of resources and in means to influence the environment and take actions accordingly. The research training should be planned taking on account also ethical aspects of research. Mandatory courses for understanding research ethics in various disciplines may be advisable. Education and training of young scientists in issues of environmental changes and environmental health is naturally the prerequisite for the future research. The multidisciplinary research team has to discuss at a very early phase such ethical issues, not only concerning the patients, but also the whole process from setting the aims of the studies through the working phases to the publishing of data.

This is also essential to justify the projects, especially when dealing with other stakeholders in society.

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