



20-23 MAY 2019
BASEL, SWITZERLAND

REPORT

The 9th ICMM Workshop on Military Medical Ethics Workshop took place from 20-23 May 2019. It was held in parallel to the 43rd ICMM World Congress in Basel (Switzerland) and the main topic of the workshop was Ethics of Dealing with Risks in Military Medicine.

The scientific program of the workshop was planned and coordinated by Dr. D. MESSELKEN (Zurich Center for Military Medical Ethics) and Lt Col D. WINKLER (Chairman of the ICMM Center of Reference for Education on IHL and Ethics). The workshop was held under the patronage of MG A. Stettbacher (Swiss Armed Forces), Prof. P. SCHABER (University of Zurich), and MG (ret) R. VAN HOOFF (ICMM).

On the first day of the workshop, a plenary session of the ICMM World Congress was dedicated to Military Medical Ethics and the Law – one of the four main topics of the ICMM World Congress 2019. The aim of this plenary session was to recall some of the central ethical and legal principles for health care personnel in conflict situations and to discuss some current challenges to health care in conflict. The three keynote speakers Prof George ANNAS, BG Darren STEWART, and Leonard RUBENSTEIN analyzed the topic from different angles and namely introduced fundamental ethical principles, the legal background for the protection of medical personnel, and current challenges to medical neutrality and the values of the (military) medical profession both by attacks against health care and recent legislation in some parts of the world.

During the two remaining workshop days, 13 invited international speakers gave lectures on different aspects of the main topic Ethics of Dealing with Risks in Military Medicine. In four workshop sessions, they presented on current research as well as reported from practical experiences and challenges in the field thus contributing to a comprehensive scientific program and a stimulating workshop. Subjects covered by the speakers included ethical issues during humanitarian assistance missions and disaster relief, namely the risk of creating new dependencies as a result of foreign intervention after natural catastrophes but also the risk imposed on medical personnel when intervention in epidemics or in context of armed conflict. A number of speakers addressed questions that arise when conducting medical research in the military context, for example by the off-label use of medication, medical human enhancement, or innovative treatment methods and the use of modern technologies (like artificial intelligence or brain-computer interfaces). Finally, presentations and discussion included the discussion of published ethical principles and national policies to implement these principles.

In a side presentation to the workshop, D. MESSELKEN presented the scenario collection in military medical ethics, an online tool to facilitate training and research developed over the last years. It can be freely accessed at <https://scenarios.military-medicalethics.ch/>

The workshop faculty (22 people including speakers, organizers, patronage, ICMM teachers and chairpersons) were joined by workshop participants and guests. Thus, over the duration of the workshop, a total of 60 people came to follow the presentations and to join the plenary discussions. Speakers and participants came both from military and civilian backgrounds and represented different academic disciplines.

The abstracts of the workshop presentations can be accessed via the program brochure on the website of the ICMM Center of Reference for Education on IHL and Ethics (<https://melac.ch/courses-workshops/ethics-workshop/2019-lilienberg>). The publication of a comprehensive volume with the contributions from the workshop is envisaged within the new book series on Military and Humanitarian Health Ethics. More information can equally be found on the website above.

The next ICMM Workshop on Military Medical Ethics is planned for May 7-9, 2020. It will again be held at the Forum Lilienberg in Ermatingen (Switzerland). The main topic and a call for papers will be published in late 2019.



Report by Daniel MESSELKEN & David WINKLER