

**Title of the study:**

The use of ethnographic videos as a tool for critical reflection in audiology ethics education

**Introduction:**

Over the past two decades, increasing attention has been given to how education can adequately prepare audiology students to recognize and appropriately respond to the ethical dimensions of their clinical practice.

These dimensions include respecting patients' autonomy and capacity to share decisions, by providing accurate information and available options about their hearing condition; sharing treatment options – in a non-directive way – including hearing aids suited to a patient's individual circumstances, centred on their needs and desires.

Other ethical dimensions in clinical practice include having knowledge, skill, and ethical awareness of potential conflicts between commercial interests of choosing and supplying hearing aids and the specific needs of the patient.

There are a variety of approaches to teaching health professional ethics, but a common goal is to ensure that students can adequately understand and recognize what constitutes ethical practice for their profession, and to respond appropriately in ethically challenging or ethically important moments.

This project focused on the development of an ethics education resource that effectively prepares audiology students for their future practice. An underlying premise of the research was that telling students and clinicians what they 'ought to do' (e.g. through a code of ethics) may not usually be enough to sustainably build ethics capacity and self-regulation. Instead educational methods that offer the chance for students to experience realistic and complex scenarios allows them to actively reflect on their own responses and to integrate knowledge about ethical principles and theories with strategies they can use to navigate future ethical challenges.

The research team comprised of Andrea Simpson (La Trobe University), Renee Garrucio (La Trobe University), Clare Delany (University of Melbourne), and Stella Ng (University of Toronto). The study used an ethnographic video developed by the IDA institute, paired with aligned theories about ethics and guiding questions to prompt critical reflection.

The goal of the study was to develop and evaluate a set of guided questions that audiology students and clinicians can use to critically reflect on ethically complex clinical scenarios in a safe and structured way (Delany et al., 2010). The goal of these questions was to facilitate greater awareness of the range of values and perspectives that patients and audiologists hold about what matters for hearing function. Expanding audiologists' capacity to think about their own assumptions and how they may differ from their patients is an important first step in enabling them to practice in a patient centred way.

**Method:**

The participants in this study were students enrolled in Clinical Audiology at La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia. The study included two groups of university students at different stages of their audiology degree – a group of 12 undergraduates (11 female, 1 male) who had not yet started their audiology-specific training, and a group of 15 post-graduates (11 female, 4 male) who were near completion.

An ethnographic video from the IDA Institute, '*I Would Love to See This Man Get Egg on His Face*' was selected for the study:

([https://idainstitute.com/what\\_we\\_do/video\\_library/ethnographic\\_films/person\\_centered\\_care\\_films/](https://idainstitute.com/what_we_do/video_library/ethnographic_films/person_centered_care_films/)).

The video portrays an older female client who declines the treatment options presented by her audiologist. The video was selected as it portrays a common ethical dilemma previously identified in audiology literature (Callahan et al., 2011).

Participants were invited to watch the video in full before completing a structured critical reflection task in groups of 3-5 students per group which were audio-recorded and later transcribed for analysis (Delany et al., 2010).

A mixed-methods research design was followed whereby members of the research team qualitatively coded group transcripts individually and inductively first (without knowledge of group assignment), looking for patterns in the data about student thinking and perceptions of ethical aspects of the case.

In addition to being assigned a code based on content, each utterance was also further classified quantitatively as to whether it was Critically Reflective (CR) or not (NR) defined according to criteria used by Ng et al. (2019). To model the predictive probabilities of discussion comments being CR, we fit a hierarchical model to determine the probability that a given comment unit would be coded as critically reflective.

The study was approved by La Trobe University Human Ethics Committee (HEC19483).

### **Key Findings:**

- Key themes identified from the analysis were: Individual Factors (IF) in which students discussed variables relevant to the client & audiologist; Organisational Factors (OF) in which students discussed variables of relevance to broader institutional or structural themes; and Hearing Devices Factors (HD) in which students discussed hearing aids and commercial themes (see Figure 1).
- Both undergraduate and post-graduate students were found to be at chance level of being critically reflective when discussing Hearing Devices (HD) (see Figure 2).
- Both undergraduate and post-graduate students were found to be above chance in being critically reflective when discussing Individual Factors (IF) (see Figure 2).
- Both undergraduate and post-graduate students were found to be less likely to be critically reflective when discussing Organisational Factors (OF), however, post-graduate students were more likely than undergraduate students to be critically reflective (see Figure 2).

### **Conclusion:**

The demand for practitioners who provide a holistic, empathic and patient-centred approach to care justifies the need for educational tools which can develop students' and clinicians' critical and ethical reasoning.

The process was found to stimulate active discussion and thinking which is preferable to 'memorising' a set of ethical principles. By making use of the IDA institute ethnographic videos participants were supported to appreciate the lived experience of those with hearing loss. The video together with guided questions (Delany et al., 2010) showed promise in encouraging students to analyse the ethical aspects of the clinical interaction and to problem solve how they would and should respond. Of interest was that some topics were easier for students to critically engage in than others.

### **About the author(s)**

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**References:**

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