

Emergency and Disaster Ethics discussed in Ethics Matters Series 9/26/2011
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When responding to a disaster, it is vital that physicians and organizations harmonize services and donations to the specific needs of the situation, avoid the duplication of efforts, behave with humility toward the host country, and approach all efforts collaboratively.



During his Ethics Matters lecture entitled “Do-Gooders Running Amok: Good Intentions, Politics, & Ethics in Emergency & Disaster Relief”, Dr. Gregory Luke Larkin, Chair and Emergency Professor at the University of Auckland illustrated these principles with reference and discussion of recent international disaster experiences. Dr. Larkin described core humanitarian principles required for humanitarian response in disasters.

During the talk, Dr. Larkin described core humanitarian principles required for humanitarian response in disasters, illustrated other core principles of response including impartiality, independence, consideration of culture and custom, and the goal of building response on local capacity, explained how humanitarian response must be based on need alone and identified problems commonly encountered in disaster responses and proffered solutions.

Dr. Thalia Arawi, Founding Director of the Salim El-Hoss Bioethics and Professionalism Program which runs the Ethics Matters Series, commented that what makes the emergency setting different is particularly that it is a setting when perhaps, certain moral rules can, and perhaps ought to, be overridden in order to save lives.

The lecture was held in collaboration with the Emergency Department at the American University of Beirut on September 19, 2011.