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REVIEW

Medico-legal and ethical considerations on resource limitation and clinical decisions during the COVID-19 pandemic[☆]



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Abstract The COVID-19 pandemic has raised ethical and medico-legal problems, which include the equitable allocation of health resources, especially in relation to the prioritization of patients and the rationing of resources. Priority setting is always present in healthcare systems and depends on the theory of justice applicable in each society. Resource rationing has been necessary in the COVID-19 pandemic, and therefore consensus documents have been published for decision-making based on four fundamental ethical values: maximization of benefits, treating people equally, contributing to creating social value and giving priority to the worst off, from which specific recommendations derive: maximize benefits; prioritize health workers; do not prioritize attendance on a first-COME, first-served basis; be sensitive to scientific evidence; recognize participation in research and apply the same principles to COVID-19 patients as to non-COVID-19 patients.

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