**An ethical dilemma?: How anatomy education impacts healthcare students’ ethics**

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**Introduction:** Donor dissection remains debated anatomy pedagogy. While short-term anatomy knowledge gains may not be impacted by dissection, studies also suggest that students’ anxiety and stress levels are. However, compared to clinical settings, donor dissection may provide a lower stress environment for introductions to death and dying. To improve the knowledge base related to this anatomy education discourse, we evaluated the longitudinal impacts of donor dissection on healthcare students’ professional identity (PI).

**Materials and Methods:** A longitudinal qualitative study with Monash University student participants from physiotherapy and medicine involved online discussion forums during semester and inter-professional focus groups at the end of semesters. Preliminary themes were developed using framework analysis.

**Results:** Seven themes related to ethics in anatomical education were identified: 1. Informed consent, 2. Non-maleficence, 3. Beneficence, 4. Dichotomy of personification versus objectification, 5. Duty of care, 6. Culture, and 7. Student response sophistication. Interestingly, students’ ethical perceptions changed with time.

**Conclusion:** The impact of donor dissection on students’ perception of ethics is complicated. Prior to this study, most investigations focused only on pre- and post- scenarios. The longitudinal approach presented here suggests a strong impact of donor dissection on priming students’ focus on medical ethics, but also suggests that over time, this effect fades. This fading effect may be mitigated with intervention, which will be a focus of future studies. This research does suggest that donor dissection may have broader impacts on students than simply knowledge acquisition.

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