

Abstract

Disasters, natural or man-made, can occur virtually anytime and anywhere in the world. They bring mass destruction and loss of human lives. The effects of a disaster can be amplified many times in resource poor settings, especially in developing countries. In a post-disaster period, many clinical interventions and a lot of research takes place which focuses on the disaster-affected populations. While many of these interventions and research are conducted in the hour of need, some, unfortunately, are opportunistic. While many of these activities happen in accordance with internationally accepted ethical and other regulations, many of them violate ethical norms, and disaster-affected populations end up being exploited. Also, many ethical regulations are culturally inappropriate for the setting where research is taking place. In the aftermath of the 2004 tsunami, a group of Sri Lankan and international academics and researchers observed these irregularities and formed a group to counter the exploitation of vulnerable populations, especially in developing countries. The Working Group on Disaster Research and Ethics (WGDRE) was formed in 2007 and has produced a set of ethical guidelines applicable to post-disaster research focusing on the developing world perspective.