Pandemic Priorities: The Impact of COVID 19 Pandemic on Ethical Leadership in the Healthcare Profession

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Aim

Leadership priorities within the healthcare setting have been brought into sharp focus by the Covid 19 pandemic, coinciding with the Black Lives Matter movement, Me Too movement, PPE shortages and staffing crises. Appropriately championing the rights of such staff is imperative. The pandemic necessitates a period of rigorous self-analysis, recognising past failures, oversights and discriminations.

Method

Utilising a modified ethical leadership questionnaire, comparing pre- and post-pandemic views of healthcare leaders on their own ethical leadership values, this study demonstrates a novel research into the effects of the pandemic on this topic.

Results

Our study has found significant changes in attitudes of healthcare leaders with regards to the ethics of justice; fewer leaders were likely to hold formal investigations and more leaders would follow unwritten rules relating to an ethical dilemma. They also would pay more attention to individuals. In addition, in terms of critique, leaders were more likely post-pandemic to speak out against injustice and unfair practices values.

Conclusion

This study shows that leaders have largely, across the three domains of ethical leadership, critique, care and justice have become more ethical in their outlook. This fits into out original hypothesis but we acknowledge that multiple confounding factors and biases may exist within this context. Whether results are due to the pandemic solely or social movements such as Black Lives Matter is unknown.