



Sisters
Hospitallers



Ethics and Bioethics

Did you know that our Institution is especially committed to ethics to adequately deal with conflicts that arise both when it comes to healthcare and management?

Discover how this area is developing in the Portuguese Province.

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My name is Alda Ramos, I am a nursing supervisor and a member of the Health Ethics Committee at the Sisters Hospitallers' "Casa de Saúde da Idanha" in Belas (Portugal).

From the Portuguese Province and led by Sister Paula Carneiro, second provincial councillor and manager of the province's healthcare area, we have made a clear commitment to foster and promote ethics and bioethics in all healthcare processes. **Our main objective is to contribute to developing a bioethical conscience among our employees, thus promoting ethical service in all the care we offer** people with mental illness and/or functional diversity, among other illnesses, the heart of the Hospitaller mission.

Now, in the Portuguese Province, we are carrying out three important initiatives in this area:

- The preparation of a set of 'worksheets' with reflections on bioethics, always related to current issues. This action is published on a quarterly basis and is distributed to all the sisters and collaborators in the Province.
- Strengthening and dynamism in the creation of 'Health Ethics Committees'. Currently, these committees exist at all our centres, with the function of providing support and guidance, at this level, to the different units and care facilities.
- The organisation of an annual meeting with the members of the 'Health Ethics Committees' to provide specialised training with professionals from outside of our institution and to exchange experiences and knowledge.

Parallel to these actions, each centre has total freedom to create its own projects such as discussion forums on the subject, among others.

It is important to highlight a specific initiative which the 'Casa de Saúde da Idanha' organises every year, carrying out a seminar on ethics that aims to contribute to reflection. Its sixth edition was held in December 2017, where we addressed '**The question of bioethics in palliative care**' as the main topic in response to the growing concern of the Portuguese medical community about the changes proposed in the strategic plan for the development of palliative care, at the national level, for the 2017-2018 biennium.

During this meeting, 130 health professionals participated; out of them, the attendance of a large number of people from outside of the Hospitaller Institution stood out. **The success of the event showed us the great interest in the sector in knowing about ethical and bioethical principles; this fact motivates us to continue developing our work of reflection and dialogue on this area of intervention.**



"Hospitality itself is a fundamental and encompassing ethical experience of our mission that reinforces the ethical dimension having to do with every action with the person receiving help. We demand that we are ethical in all areas and decisions"

(The Institution's Framework of Identity, 38)