



Mains Practice Question

Case Studies

A landslide occurred in the middle of the night on 20th July, 2023 in a remote mountain hamlet, approximately 60 kilometres from Uttarkashi. The landslide was caused by torrential rains and has resulted in large-scale destruction of property and life. You, as District Magistrate of that area, have rushed to the spot with a team of doctors, NGOs, media and police along with numerous support staff to oversee the rescue operations. A man came running to you with a request for urgent medical help for his pregnant wife who is in labour and is losing blood. You directed your medical team to examine his wife. They return and convey to you that this woman needs blood transfusion immediately. Upon enquiry, you come to know that a few blood collection bags and blood group test kits are available in the ambulance accompanying your team. Few people of your team have already volunteered to donate blood. Being a physician who has graduated from AIIMS, you know that blood for transfusion needs to be procured only through a recognized blood bank. Your team members are divided on this issue; some favour transfusion, while Home others oppose it. The doctors in the team are ready to facilitate the delivery provided they are not penalized for transfusion. Now you are in a dilemma. Your professional training emphasizes on prioritising service to humanity and saving lives of individuals.

- A. What are the ethical issues involved in this case ?
- B. Evaluate the options available to you, being District Magistrate of the area. (Answer in 250 words, UPSC Mains 2023)

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Approach:

- Briefly introduce the situation: the landslide, your role as District Magistrate, and the urgent medical need for a pregnant woman in labor.
- Discuss the ethical issues involved in the case and Options available to you as a District Megistrate of the area.
- Conclude by summarizing the course of action and reiterate the importance of prioritizing human life while navigating ethical and other complexities.

Introduction:

In the aftermath of a devastating landslide near Uttarkashi, I, as District Magistrate, face an ethical quandary. Urgent medical assistance is required for a pregnant woman, but the dilemma arises in deciding whether to proceed with a blood transfusion without a recognized blood bank, navigating the delicate balance between saving a life and upholding medical protocols.

Body:

- **Ethical Issues:**
 - **Patient Welfare:** The paramount ethical concern is the life-threatening condition of the pregnant woman and her unborn child, necessitating immediate medical intervention due to severe bleeding.
 - **Blood Safety:** The use of blood for transfusion that is not sourced from a recognized blood

bank raises serious safety concerns.

- **Informed Consent:** It is essential to consider whether the patient or her family has been informed about the risks and benefits of the blood transfusion, if it is not from a recognized source.
- **Medical Ethics:** Medical professionals within the team are torn between their commitment to saving lives and the need to adhere to medical ethics and standards.
- **Legal and Regulatory Compliance:** The situation raises questions about legal and regulatory compliance regarding blood transfusions.
- **Options Available:**
 - **Seek Blood from a Recognized Blood Bank:** The District Magistrate should prioritize patient safety and adhere to medical ethics by arranging for blood from a recognized blood bank.
 - **Local Blood Collection with Screening:** If feasible, conduct a rapid blood group test on potential donors from the team.
 - **Expert Consultation:** Reach out to medical experts for guidance and advice on the best course of action given the circumstances.

Conclusion:

Ultimately, the decision should consider the gravity of the situation, the immediacy of medical needs, and the potential consequences of actions. Prioritizing the preservation of life while exploring ways to mitigate legal concerns may be a reasonable ethical approach, emphasizing both the duty to protect the community and uphold medical standards

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