

An ethically-focused critical review of Médecins Sans Frontiers' (MSF) collaborative research partnerships

2018-2023

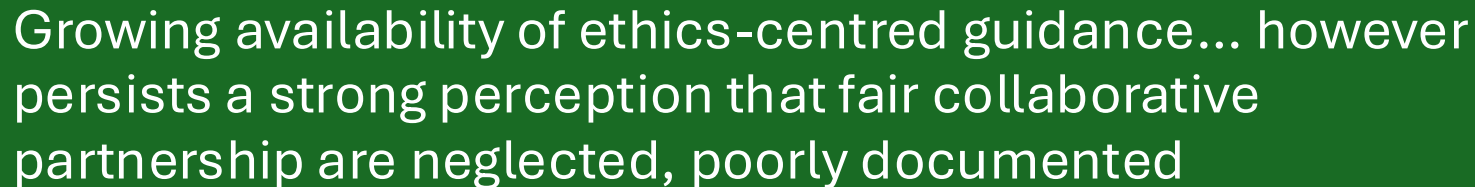


Equity in collaborative research partnerships in humanitarian/emergency settings

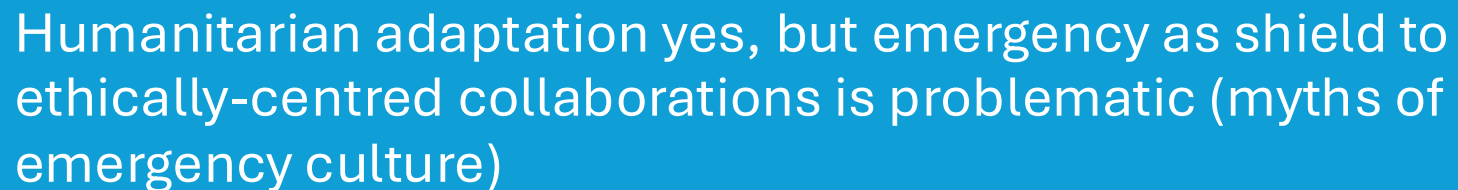
Seen as ETHICAL IMPERATIVE while uneven practice in implementation

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Growing availability of ethics-centred guidance... however persists a strong perception that fair collaborative partnership are neglected, poorly documented

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Humanitarian adaptation yes, but emergency as shield to ethically-centred collaborations is problematic (myths of emergency culture)

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Emergencies & equity in research partnerships

Extractive research practices – always negative – in emergencies can *actively do harm* by diverting attention and focus from realising the humanitarian imperative

Feasibility issues are exacerbated (competing priorities)

Emergency declaration/categorisation by official bodies can be disputed, as they trigger legal and political obligations and commitments beyond humanitarian scope

MSF ERB analysis framework



Focus on articulating and making explicit the kinds of values or other **ethical considerations** that are taken to be of crucial importance in relation to the humanitarian medicine context



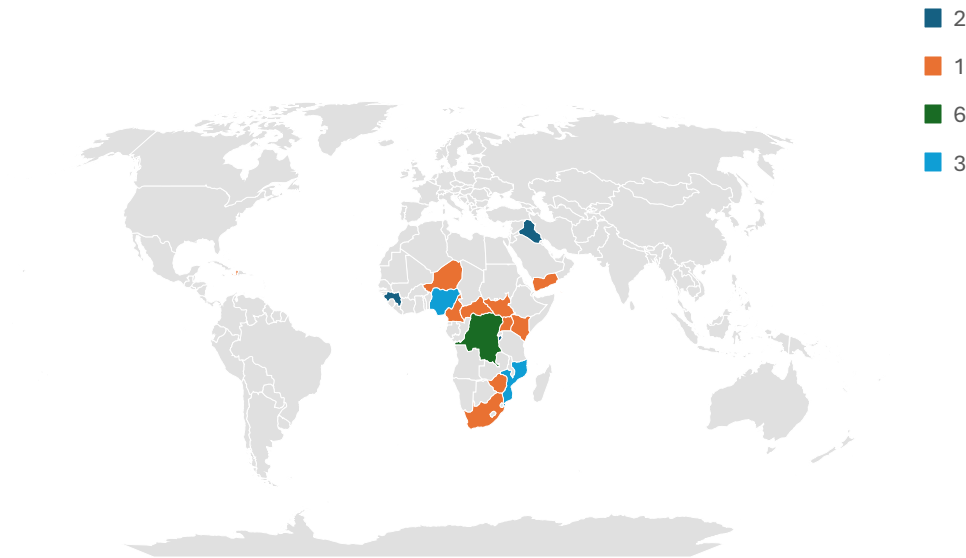
Complex matters where the **benchmarks often fail to capture the nuances relevant to thinking about ethics** among triggers for development



Considers a 'pre-approval' of emergency protocols, successfully **used in assessing the validity of new rapid diagnostic tests during a meningitis outbreak** with no reported harms to participants and enhanced ability of researchers to respond in a timely manner

Preliminary results

Geographical distribution of studies



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Emergency settings top scoring

- **DRC**, “Field evaluation of measles vaccine effectiveness”
- **Nigeria**, “Field evaluation of validity and feasibility of Pan Lassa rapid diagnostic test for Lassa fever”
- **Guinea Conakry**, “Immune response to a delayed second dose of oral cholera vaccine. Conakry”

Ethical discussion

Emergencies exacerbate challenges to ethical research in humanitarian settings but are still feasible- challenging myths

Top studies demonstrate it is beneficial to do ethically-sound research partnerships within the countries – feasibility

At a time where racism and inequalities are on the rise (Black lives matter, COVID-19 vaccine apartheid, genocide in Gaza) whether you are practical, instrumental or ethically guided

Equity is at the heart of quality research & collaborative partnerships