



Short Communications

Why Police Ethics Matters

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Abstract: When police abuse their duties, it undermines the state's internal security. It creates a crisis of legitimacy of police because people detest them for their abuse and tyranny. In 1957, IACP (the International Association of Chiefs of Police) developed an ethics tool Code of Ethics for law enforcement. Nevertheless, training has been focused and emphasized on techniques and tactics of policing. Ethics is not the part of pre-sell of the training. The Code of Ethics is pronounced once in a life only during pass-out day. Police face dilemmas in real-time situations with people and society. This is why, this article is concerned with ethics a tool, and procedures to reduce police abuse.

Keywords: Police, abuse, ethics, bioethics, code of conduct

Introduction: Police abuse hurts police departments and police agencies. It destroys the image and morale of the police. Additionally, some citizens develop hostile attitudes toward the police. Even, people violently attack on police to death¹. Major problems of police departments are corruption and political influence². The police were created to redress the grievances of distressed people by enforcement of law and order³. However, the public has lost confidence in the police and doesn't see the police as their friends³. When police deviate from the purpose for which they are set up, abuses arise⁴. Unethical conducts by police bring instability and police abuse. Researchers reported that police abuses can be restrained through ethics education^{4,5,6}.

Therefore, this article argues why ethics matter for police.

Why police need ethics: Ethics deals with systematic evaluation of the rightness or wrongness of human conduct⁷. Ethics makes society better, improves the conduct of people, helps people find meaningful employment, succeeds in business, and reduces stress⁸. The IACP adopted the Law Enforcement Code of Ethics in 1957⁹. It says in brief

As a law enforcement officer, my fundamental duty is to serve the community; to safeguard lives and property; to protect the innocent against deception, the weak against oppression or intimidation and the peaceful against violence or disorder; and to respect the constitutional rights of all to liberty, equality, and justice.

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However, police only provide training on the criminal law, defensive tactics, and crime reduction strategies, neglecting moral character development in police¹⁰. Research indicates that only 3% of training hours are allocated for ethics education out of a total period of police training¹¹. Also, researchers indicate that police higher education receive fewer citizen complaints than officers without a college education¹². The US President's Task Force in 2015, reported that educational standards and increased ethics training can develop the professionalism of police⁵. Camden, New Jersey, fired 250 police officers for brutality and tyranny in 2018, was one of the most violent cities in America. And recruited new officers, trained in de-escalation techniques including the use of firearms and handcuffs as a means of a last resort. It is interesting to note that Camden's violent crime rate was decreased by 42% and its murder rate was decreased by half¹³. Other states also use this example to reform the police. This may be the cause during the protests over George Floyd's death, police joined the protests. Therefore, in addition to police tactics and strategies, an ethics-based curriculum that focuses on human life values should be implemented.

Police ethics helps officers to know the way they should live and conduct themselves during duty. Police ethical principles of accountability, fairness, and integrity, make citizens safer and more just¹⁴. Police ethics promotes self-respect and mutual respect among police⁹. The code of ethics makes police responsible for keeping law and order in criminal justice¹¹. It plays a vital role in creating a positive image of police before the public¹⁰. Lack of ethics can lead to misconduct, corruption, and a breakdown of the justice system¹⁴.

Conclusion: Ethics and integrity training should be integrated into all phases of training in the academia, and throughout the career of police to reform the police for the people and the society according to the postmodern era. Ethics training can reduce misconduct, resolve

conflicts of interest and biases, identify correct and incorrect decision-making, and avoid future mistakes. Moreover, police with the Code of Ethics can accept certain rights of members of civil society while arresting, protecting the rights of citizens and preventing citizens from crime and other harm.

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