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Ethical dilemmas working with older adults: In-depth interview with Australian psychologists**Dina Jones***Department of Psychological Science, Australia*

As the worldwide population ages, there are increasing opportunities for psychologists to contribute to the wellbeing of older adults. These clients have particular vulnerabilities that need to be considered when dealing with ethical issues. This study aimed to gain an in-depth understanding of how Australian psychologists manage ethical dilemmas when working with older adults. Eighteen psychologists participated in semi-structured interviews during which they provided 30 cases which were identified as suitable for analysis. Interviews were transcribed and analysed using interpretative content analysis. The 30 case studies included a range of residential situations and professional settings. The findings indicated that: (1) Ethical dilemmas presented by psychologists reflect the ethical principles of respect, dignity and propriety, (2), Many considerations are taken into account by psychologists when deciding how they manage ethical dilemmas, and (3) Elder abuse is a challenging and prevalent ethical issue for psychologists. This study demonstrated that psychologists use a sophisticated process of ethical decision making when working with older adults. There is an inherent tension between protecting older clients from harm, and advocating for their autonomy. The 30 real-world cases provide an invaluable resource for research and training in applied ethics.

Biography

Dina Jones has completed his studies in the Department of Psychological Science, under the Swinburne University of Technology, located in Australia.