

Medical Ethics in the Australian Defence Force

Rosemary A. Landy and John H. Pearn

Introduction

The Australian Defence Medical Ethics Committee (ADMEC) is representative of institutional ethics committees (IECs) which monitor the ethical integrity of research undertaken in the military domain. The ADMEC considers the ethical implications of all proposed human factors and biomedical research on human volunteers involving the Australian Defence Force (ADF). Such research may include servicemen and women volunteers within Australia or overseas, research on Defence establishments such as military bases and airfields, and uniformed health personnel conducting research in Australia or overseas.

ADMEC is the approving authority for all medical research in the ADF and monitors all approved projects to ensure continued compliance with the Declaration of Helsinki¹ and National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) guidelines² as these are promulgated by the Australian Health Ethics Committee (AHEC). It occasionally considers broader ethical issues that may arise in the context of military policy.

ADMEC's History and Composition

The background to the formation of the Australian Defence Medical Ethics Committee stems from the Declaration of Helsinki in 1964, the Statement

© *Professional Ethics* 2001. Correspondence may be sent to Major Rosemary Landy, Executive member of the Australian Defence Medical Ethics Committee and Major General John Pearn, AM, RFD, Surgeon General of the Australian Defence Force, Department of Defence, Canberra ACT 2600.