

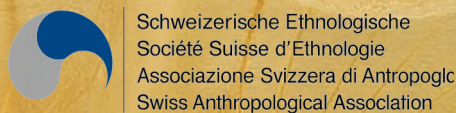
The Ethics of Health Research Participation, Observation, and Power in Practice

Kuppelraum, Hauptgebäude H4
Hochschulstrasse 4
University of Bern
26 March 2026

Organised by **Medical Anthropology Switzerland (MAS)**

Principal Organisers

Karin van Holten, Kurt Zurfluh, Sandra Staudacher, Eva Soom Ammann



Ethnographic and participatory approaches have become central to health and health care research, offering situated insights into how illness experiences, professional practices, institutional logics, and both health related inequalities and structural inequities unfold in everyday contexts.

These forms of inquiry rely on relational engagement and sustained interaction—conditions in which ethical questions arise dynamically and cannot be fully anticipated through conventional, procedurally oriented ethics frameworks.

This symposium brings together researchers and co-researchers from medical anthropology, qualitative health research, and participatory research to explore ethics as situated practice, process, and relationship. It is participatory in the sense that questions and issues at stake will be discussed with all participants, and that these discussions will serve as a basis for outlining core principles for ethics in practice.

In the morning, through integrated conceptual inputs and case based examples, participants examine tensions that constitute core ethical dimensions of interaction-intensive health research, including power dynamics, epistemic (in)justice, inequality and inequity, vulnerability, emotional labour, participation, and shared accountability.

In the afternoon, an Ethical Scenario Lab invites participants to collaboratively analyse ethically complex moments from ethnographic and participatory research.

The day concludes with a collective synthesis aimed at formulating preliminary “ethics in practice principles” for interaction intensive health research.

PROGRAM

09:00 Welcome and Introductory Words
Co-Presidents Eva Soom Ammann and Sandra Staudacher

09:15 Thematic Contributions &
Case-Based Discussion
Including Coffee Break

12:00 *Lunch Break*

13:30 Ethical Scenario Labs
Depicting Ethically Complex Moments
Including Coffee Break

17:00 Closing Remarks

REGISTRATION

Participation is free, but registration is mandatory, please [register by clicking here.](#)