Ethics on Demand – Hiding Errors

**Article:** [**Five suspended for wrong blood transfusion in Andhra Pradesh**](http://www.newindianexpress.com/states/andhra-pradesh/2019/jun/30/five-suspended-for-wrong-blood-transfusion-in-andhra-pradesh-1997410.html)

**What was the situation?**

A 32-year-old new mother died at a hospital in India on June 26, 2019. The woman was given the wrong blood group during a transfusion (B positive instead of O blood). During the inquiry, the family was misled by the hospital staff, who stressed that the patient’s blood was B positive. It was found that staff manipulated records to hide the mistake, including changing case sheets and even blood samples to fabricate evidence.

**What went wrong?**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Lack of morality and integrity | Lack of professional responsibility for actions | Lack of skill/knowledge causing death |

**Using the Code of Ethics**

The [CSMLS Code of Ethics](https://www.csmls.org/About-Us/Our-Members/Code-of-Ethics.aspx) serves to define and expand the inherent ethical concepts contained in the [CSMLS Code of Professional Conduct](https://www.csmls.org/About-Us/Our-Members/Code-of-Conduct.aspx), document expectations of ethical behaviour for all medical laboratory professionals and provide a framework during professional and personal self-evaluation. Consider how adhering to these codes could have prevented the situation. What other codes are applicable?

*Code of Ethics*

* 1.4 Utilize professional and institutional mechanisms to intervene when witness to unsafe, incompetent or unethical practices.
* 1.5 Assume responsibility for errors one has committed or observed and take immediate action to prevent or minimize associated harm.
* 4.3 Be responsible for the quality, integrity and reliability of the laboratory services one provides.
* 5.3 Encourage the trust and confidence of the public through high standards of professional competence, conduct and deportment.

*Code of Professional Conduct*

* Medical laboratory professionals shall take responsibility for their professional acts.
* Medical laboratory professionals are dedicated to serving the healthcare needs of the public. The welfare of the patient and respect for the dignity of the individual shall be paramount at all times.

**Relevant Articles**

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# [Right Patient, Wrong Sample](https://psnet.ahrq.gov/webmm/case/142/Right-Patient-Wrong-Sample)

[Diagnostic Errors and Laboratory Medicine – Causes and Strategies](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4975219/)

# [Texas woman died after hospital gave wrong blood type in transfusion](https://www.newsweek.com/texas-houston-baylor-st-lukes-medical-center-president-doug-lawson-blood-1345355)

[Oops. Correcting scientific errors](https://www.sciencenewsforstudents.org/blog/eureka-lab/oops-correcting-scientific-errors)