Ethics on Demand – Racism

**Article:** [**Ignored to death: Brian Sinclair's death caused by racism, inquest inadequate, group says**](https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/winnipeg-brian-sinclair-report-1.4295996)

**What was the situation?**

Brian Sinclair, an Indigenous 45-year-old homeless double-amputee, went to the emergency room at a Winnipeg hospital for a blocked catheter and a urinary tract infection. Thirty-four hours later, Sinclair was found dead in his wheelchair, after waiting in the hospital's emergency room for more than a day without being seen.

A report into the death of Brian Sinclair showed that four members of the public approached emergency room staff on four separate occasions to report concerns about Sinclair but were largely ignored. Health care workers and security personnel from the hospital believed that Sinclair had been discharged, was intoxicated and "sleeping it off”, and had nowhere to go (homeless or avoiding the cold weather).

**What went wrong?**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Disregard of human life (racism) | Lack of professional responsibility | Lack of patientadvocacy |

**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), to document expectations of ethical behaviour for all medical laboratory professionals, and to 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*

* 5.1 Provide service with dignity and respect to all, regardless of race, religion, sexual orientation, sex, gender identity, age, health status, or mental or physical disability.
* 3.1 Reflect on one’s fitness to practise and expand one's knowledge, skills, judgments and attitudes through continued professional development.
* 1.6 Advocate for working environments that support safe, competent and ethical practices.

*Code of Professional Conduct*

* 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.

**Resources**

[Indigenous Health (CSMLS produced webpage)](https://www.csmls.org/Professional-Development/Expand-Your-Knowledge/Resource-on-Indigenous-Health.aspx)

[3 Free online courses on reconciliation and indigenous education](https://www.humanrightscareers.com/magazine/3-free-online-courses-on-reconciliation-and-indigenous-education/)

[Brian Sinclair ignored by Winnipeg ER: report](https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/brian-sinclair-ignored-by-winnipeg-er-report-1.1385107)