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Confronting and managing ethical dilemmas in social work using ChatGPT

התמודדות עם דילמות אתיות בעבודה סוציאלית ופתרונן באמצעות ChatGPT

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ABSTRACT

Artificial intelligence (AI) is increasingly proving to be capable of assisting humans in complex decision-making processes. ChatGPT has become a crucial tool for assessing mental health and emotional awareness and helping to predict outcomes. Social workers' use of ChatGPT in navigating ethical dilemmas remains relatively unexplored. In this study, ChatGPT is compared to the Israeli Ethics Committee's responses to assess its utility in aiding social workers' ethical decisions. We translated questions previously sent to the Israeli Ethics Committee and posed them to ChatGPT-4 twice, one month apart. A significant improvement was observed in ChatGPT's second round of responses, which were more comprehensive and emphasised ethical dilemma complexity. ChatGPT consistently highlighted conflicting obligations and professional boundaries, contributing to a more nuanced understanding of ethical issues. The Ethics Committee's responses provided clearer, more actionable guidance, and was more concerned with legal issues. ChatGPT's tendency to address a variety of considerations ensures its potential to enhance ethical decision-making awareness and its value as a tool for social workers but it is not yet capable of independently resolving ethical dilemmas. ChatGPT's promising progress in supporting ethical decision-making in social work has led to discussions regarding the ethical implications of AI implementation within therapeutic professions.

תקציר

הבינה המלאכותית (AI) מוכיחה יותר ויותר את יכולתה לסייע לבני אדם בתהליכי קבלת החלטות מורכבים. ChatGPT הפך לכלי חיוני להערכת בריאות נפשית ומודעות רגשית ולסיוע בחיזוי תוצאות. עם זאת, השימוש של עובדים סוציאליים ב-ChatGPT לצורך התמודדות עם דילמות אתיות טרם נחקר לעומק. במחקר זה השווינו את תגובות ChatGPT לאלו של ועדת האתיקה הישראלית, במטרה להעריך את יעילותו בסיוע לעובדים סוציאליים בקבלת החלטות בדילמות אתיות. תרגמנו שאלות שהופנו בעבר לוועדת האתיקה הישראלית והצגנו אותן ל-ChatGPT-4 פעמיים, בהפרש של חודש. בהתאם לממצאי המחקר נצפה שיפור משמעותי בסבב התשובות השני של ChatGPT: התשובות היו מקיפות יותר והדגישו את מורכבות הדילמות האתיות. ChatGPT הצביע באופן עקבי על התחייבויות מתנגשות וגבולות מקצועיים, ובכך תרם להבנה מעמיקה יותר של הסוגיות האתיות. לעומת זאת,

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תגובות ועדת האתיקה סיפקו הנחיות ברורות ויישומיות יותר, תוך התייחסות נרחבת להיבטים משפטיים. הנטייה של ChatGPT להתייחס למגוון שיקולים מבטיחה את הפוטנציאל שלו להגברת המודעות לקבלת החלטות אתיות ומדגישה את ערכו ככלי עזר לעובדים סוציאליים. עם זאת, הוא עדיין אינו מסוגל לפתור דילמות אתיות באופן עצמאי. ההתקדמות המבטיחה של ChatGPT בתמיכה בקבלת החלטות אתיות בעבודה סוציאלית הובילה לדיונים בנוגע להשלכות האתיות של שילוב בינה מלאכותית במקצועות טיפוליים.

Introduction

Artificial intelligence systems have demonstrated the capability to perform tasks that traditionally require human judgment in the decision-making process (Hodgson et al., 2021; Hu, 2023). During the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, artificial intelligence (AI) gained prominence as a decision-making tool in social and political domains (Etienne, 2022) and in November 2022 became an integral part of our lives with the implementation of ChatGPT (Faggella, 2020; Hodgson et al., 2021; Hu, 2023).

As described by Jürgen and colleagues, the Chat-GPT (Generative Pre-trained Transformer) website is an advanced conversational model 'designed to generate text that is indistinguishable from text written by humans. It can engage in conversations with users in a seemingly natural and intuitive way' (Jürgen et al., 2023, p. 342).

Intelligent technology is made possible through prompt engineering, where specific inputs such as prompts, questions, or queries, are fed into an artificial intelligence or language model to obtain specific outputs (Tangermann, 2023).The use of artificial intelligence has seen significant growth in various fields including education (Asakura et al., 2020; Bayne, 2015; Jürgen et al., 2023), healthcare (Molala & Mbaya, 2023) and caregiving, where social scientists collaborate with AI in mental health decision-making (Molala & Mbaya, 2023). For instance, studies that investigated ChatGPT have been conducted to determine whether its ability to assess mental health emotional awareness is better than that of humans (Elyoseph et al., 2023), and whether it succeeded in predicting outcomes such as suicide (Nordin et al., 2022), or identifying cases of domestic violence (Petering et al., 2018).

The professional literature theoretically references the possible consequences of ChatGPT on social work practice. For example, ChatGPT could help social workers produce field-relevant texts such as case summaries or psychosocial assessments (Goldkind et al., 2023). There are also references in the literature to the use of artificial intelligence in social work teaching (Asakura et al., 2020; Hodgson et al., 2021; Singer et al., 2023), to predicting the future risk of removing children from their home (Lehtiniemi, 2023; Meilvang & Dahler, 2022) and as a decision-making support system in treatment interventions for mental health patients (Jacobi & Christensen, 2022). As far as we know, however, there are no existing studies on the use of artificial intelligence and ChatGPT to confront and manage ethical dilemmas in social work.

Thus, the aim of this study was to evaluate whether ChatGPT can effectively assist social workers in resolving ethical dilemmas by proposing potential solutions. Our study questions were:

Can GhatGPT be a primary source of support for social workers in confronting and managing ethical dilemmas? And if so,

1. To what extent does ChatGPT recognise conflicting obligations in ethical dilemmas when compared to the responses given by the Ethics Committee members?
2. Are there any differences between ChatGPT and the Ethics Committee's responses regarding legal aspects and providing clear instructions for action when dealing with ethical dilemmas?

To investigate these issues, we compared the responses provided over the years by the Israeli Ethics Committee for several ethical dilemmas to the responses provided by ChatGPT for the same ethical questions.

The use of technology and AI in social work

Social workers have increasingly adopted information and communication technologies (ICTs) and integrated digital practices into their daily work, both during and after the COVID-19 pandemic (Mishna et al., 2021). In their book 'Artificial Intelligence and Social Work', Tambe and Rice (2018) highlighted the use of artificial intelligence in social work both for the common good and to address social problems. For example, interventions could be designed to enhance HIV information dissemination by employing algorithms to identify key individuals within a network of homeless youth, or to identify individuals with type 2 diabetes who are under significant stress by using a chatbot to provide sexual health information and algorithms.

Despite the advantages of artificial intelligence in therapeutic professions, ethical questions arise about the limits of its use, potential risks to freedom of human thought, and the ways AI might affect informed consent, confidentiality, and patient privacy, especially in treatment contexts (Hodgson et al., 2021).

Solving ethical dilemmas in social work

In the field of social work, numerous ethical dilemmas affect clients, colleagues, employers and the profession itself (Banks, 2016). Various models for resolving ethical dilemmas in social work have been developed, all emphasising similar principles for ethical decision-making: identifying central ethical values, customer values, organisations and groups affected by the ethical decision, assessing relevant codes of ethics and applicable laws, exploring possible choices and their pros and cons, seeking advice from colleagues, reaching a decision, and documenting the decision-making process and reasons (Congress, 2000; Reamer, 2018).

In 2018, the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) published a Global Statement of Ethical Principles in Social Work (Global Social Work Statement of Ethical Principles, 2018) to provide a comprehensive framework for social workers worldwide, highlighting core values such as human rights, social justice, self-determination, participation, privacy, holistic treatment of individuals, ethical use of technology and social media, and professional integrity.

Codes of ethics in social work serve as guidance in resolving ethical dilemmas, supporting the values of the profession and setting standards for social workers' actions (Global Social Work Statement of Ethical Principles, 2018; The Israeli Code of Ethics for Reamer, 2018; Social Work, 2018). In addition, the Ethics Committee of the Social Workers Union offers support in resolving ethical dilemmas, aiming to instill ethical values in social workers and provide guidance on specific dilemmas and issues (IFSW Ethics Commission, n.d.; Reamer, 2018).

The Committee for Collective Ethics in the Union of Israeli Social Workers is a regulatory and non-statutory committee responsible for advising social workers, handling customer complaints against social workers as well as collegial complaints and conducting discussions on professional ethics (Israeli Ethics Commission, 2023). Its 20 members are social workers representing the various fields of social work. When the Committee is asked how to manage an ethical dilemma, its members discuss the issue and render their advice to the head of the committee, who relays the Committee's response. The existing models for confronting ethical dilemmas clearly suggest that social workers should, among other things, consult with colleagues and seek the advice of their organisation's legal advisors (Congress, 2000; Reamer, 2018). Of course, these resources may not always be readily available or knowledgeable about the specific ethical challenges faced by the social worker (Reamer, 2018). Therefore, in this study we wanted to examine whether the easily-accessible ChatGPT can be a primary source of support for social workers in solving ethical dilemmas.

Methods

From 1999 to 2002, the Ethics Committee in Israel published information in the '*Alei Etica*' [trans. *On Ethics*] journal, addressing general issues in the field of social work and questions submitted by social

workers in Israel. For reasons unknown to the general public, the committee ceased journal publication but occasionally shared questions and answers in the Union of Social Workers in Israel's newsletter, specifically in March 2017 and November 2018. In total, the committee received and responded to 14 questions. We wanted to compare the responses to these questions with the responses that ChatGPT would generate today. As the Ethics Committee published its answers to questions from social workers, we felt that there was no need to seek assessments from other professionals. We therefore proceeded to translate the questions and answers from Hebrew to English for the purpose of this study.

Since the answers generated by the ChatGPT website are based on a probabilistic model – i.e. by using deep learning, the models learn to predict what could be a likely continuation of a text based on statistical probabilities (Hu, 2023) – and to be certain of the accuracy of the results generated, we decided to pose the same questions to ChatGPT-4 on two separate occasions, first on 18 August 2023 and then approximately a month later on 23 September 2023. In both rounds, ChatGPT was provided with the same 14 questions that had been posed to the Ethics Committee in Israel.

The idea of comparing ChatGPT's responses in two rounds with those of the Ethics Committee was to assess whether the second attempt would demonstrate improved knowledge compared to the first attempt.

ChatGPT was engaged using the following prompts:

> We shall play a game now. You are a member of the Ethics Committee of the Union of Social Workers in Israel. A social worker sends you a question about an ethical dilemma he is facing and asks for an answer on how to proceed. For example, a question was presented to the Ethics Committee: Most of my patients are lawbreakers. Sometimes we hear details from them about a crime committed in the past and sometimes about such things that may happen in the future. Is it my duty to report this to the police?# The Ethics Committee answered: 'The social work profession is blessed by the fact that social workers are devoted and loyal not only to their clients but to society as a whole. The conflicts between these commitments and loyalty are often complex and professional. Reporting crimes allegedly committed or to be committed by clients will certainly contribute greatly to police officers' ability to maintain law and order. However, this also violates treatment and confidentiality obligations. In this matter, two situations must be understood. As for the past, including crimes, [the social worker] is not required to report anything except, as the law declares, –harm caused to a minor or a helpless person. At the same time, if the social worker hears from the client about a future criminal act that he/she may be able to prevent, all necessary measures should be taken to do so, including reporting it to the legal authorities (Section 262 of the Penal Code). These are acts that are being planned and there is a real risk to people. It is therefore appropriate and necessary to make clear to patients in advance that the treatment contract includes limits to confidentiality, and that there is an obligation to violate it when the law requires it'. # For now, the example is over, let's play.

We then presented the 14 questions to ChatGPT (Table 1) and asked for responses to the social workers' dilemmas. We entered all answers provided by the Ethics Committee and both rounds with ChatGPT into a table and compared them. First, before investigating the content, we evaluated the amount of text in all the responses to determine how comprehensive and detailed they were. Secondly, we checked whether both sources identified where a social worker's obligations conflicted and thus created the ethical dilemma. Thirdly, we examined whether the answers addressed the legal aspects of the dilemma and fourthly, whether the recommendations were clear enough to allow the social worker to incorporate them into actions.

Results

Identification of conflicting obligations

In 100% of its responses in both rounds, ChatGPT described the conflicting obligations within the ethical dilemma at the start of its answer to the social worker. The Ethics Committee described the conflicting obligations in 85% of its answers. For example, in response to question #4 about a couple in treatment where the husband smokes drugs (marijuana) and the wife is pregnant, the social worker asks whether he should report the danger that his client's behaviour may present to

Table 1. The questions presented to ChatGPT.

#	Question
2	A financial company requested to donate electrical products to needy families. The company conditioned its donation on the prior receipt of a list of the families, without their knowledge, so that the company's representative could surprise them with the donation. Can it be allowed, for the sake of noble and positive purposes, to violate the duty of confidentiality?
3	As part of the work of investigating youth, social workers are required to record the investigation and/or questioning. Recently, in one of the interrogation centres, which is operated by social workers, a procedure was established that allows other authorised officials involved in the investigation to watch the questioning through a one-way mirror, without the youths under investigation knowing that other people are watching them on the other side of the mirror. In your opinion, is this procedure ethically sound?
6	I am employed as a welfare worker in a large factory. It recently came to my attention that one of the workers is going through a difficult period in his life, and in private conversations with his friends he even talked about the possibility of ending his life. In the conversation I had with him, he confirmed the words and even stated that these were 'talk between the guys' and nothing more. He asked me not to mention this to his family members. At the factory's management meeting, the issue was brought up by the human resources manager and the factory's CEO demanded that he inform the employee's family about his condition. The CEO stated that he was worried for the employee, but no less than that, he was worried for the good name of the factory and his own responsibility if something were to happen. Assuming that the employee will not give his consent to the transfer of the information to the family and/or to another party, am I allowed to do so without his consent?
7	I manage Public Welfare Services that serve a population from a wide geographical area. Recently, one of the employees contacted me and stated that he is planning to open a clinic to provide a unique service, among other things, to the residents of the area. Although I have a lot of faith in the employee, I see this as a flawed move. What are the rules of ethics used in this case?
8	I work in welfare services. Recently, I was asked to report on a client in my care to a colleague who works in another welfare unit, as part of her care for the client's family. The request was urgent and I could not inform the client and ask for his consent to transfer the information. I would like to know if, in order to transfer information between social workers within welfare services, there is a need at all to waive client confidentiality.
10	I work in the municipal welfare services. I am treating a woman who suffers from personality disorders and depression (diagnosed but not treated regularly, and also a history of drug abuse). Due to dysfunction and violent and abusive relationships in her family, it was recently decided to remove her children from her custody and they are integrated into an out-of-home setting. This week she told me that she started working as a kindergarten assistant with children in a nearby city. Is it my ethical duty to report her situation to her employers at the kindergarten?
11	Most of our patients have broken the law. Sometimes I hear from them details about a crime in the past and sometimes about things that might happen in the future. Is it our duty to report this to the police?
12	I am an attorney at a boarding school. There is a 65-year-old volunteer on the staff who works with teenagers and helps them with their studies and sometimes also with social activities. He is amazing in his seriousness and his attitude towards the students, the boarding school framework and the work in general. Everyone is very satisfied with him. A few days ago I indirectly received information about his past. More than twenty years, he had dysfunction problems in his family, including suspected acts of violence, and I was told there was talk of removing his children from his home. It is not clear whether a person with such a background is suitable for working with teenagers, even though today, as mentioned, he functions flawlessly.
13	For years I have been working as a social worker in matters of procedural law. Recently, a close friend whom I know well contacted me and asked for my advice regarding her children and the dispute she has with her ex-husband. She asked me to write her a personal opinion, as a close friend, and specifically mention my professional and occupation in the field of legal procedures. I really want to help my friend, but feel uneasy about this request.
14	I was asked to write an opinion about a patient who was in my treatment for only a short time. Looking through the file in the department I found a lot of documents and information about her, some of which I did not know. Am I allowed to state in my opinion details that I only know from looking at the file without having discussed it with her?

Questions 1,4,5,9 were addressed in the Results section.

the fetus. The Ethics Committee did not specify conflicting obligations**.** ChatGPT described the conflicting obligations at the outset in the first response round:

> Eliminating the social system is not only about providing assistance and support to clients, but also preserving the rights and security of those who are unable to defend themselves, including a fetus.

And in the second round of responses:

> Respect the autonomy of the pregnant woman and her husband in making decisions about their health and pregnancy. While you have an ethical duty to protect the well-being of the child, it is also important to respect the rights of the parents to make informed decisions about their lives and their pregnancy.

The ChatGPT response in the second round seems to emphasise the conflicting obligations even more than it did in the first round.

Another example is question #5 in which the social worker asked the Ethics Committee about a more senior employee (not a social worker) at his workplace who requested information from a treatment file. The social worker asked if he could refuse this request given that his supervisor pays his salary. The Ethics Committee mentioned the following obligations as being in conflict:

> The obligation to maintain confidentiality precedes any requirement imposed on an employee by his employer, unless the law provides otherwise […] the social worker reserves the right to make a different decision to protect the client and his duty is to make this clear to the supervisor.

ChatGPT's first round of responses made similar mention of the conflicting obligations:

> Patient privacy and protection of personal data is a basic component of the ethical principles of welfare and social workers. This is a commitment to which we, as social workers, are committed to our patients, and it is not to be undermined by a person's hierarchical status in the workplace.

The second ChatGPT response round expanded on the social worker's ethical obligations compared to the first response:

> Confidentiality and Ethical Obligations: As a social worker, you have a fundamental ethical obligation to protect the confidentiality and privacy of your clients and their treatment information. This obligation is grounded in the ethical principles that guide the social work profession.

ChatGPT expands its answer with additional obligations, mentioning professional boundaries:

> Maintaining professional boundaries is essential to uphold the integrity of the therapeutic relationship and ensure that clients' trust is not compromised. Access to treatment files should be restricted to those individuals who have a legitimate need to know and are directly involved in the client's care.

ChatGPT then addresses the issue of the supervisor-subordinate relationship:

> The fact that your supervisor is the one who pays your salary adds a layer of complexity to this situation. It is crucial to manage this relationship ethically, ensuring that decisions regarding access to confidential client information are made based on professional considerations rather than the power dynamic within the organization.

Yet another example is question #1 concerning a woman known to the welfare services as having struggled with mental illness and who was accused in the past of physically abusing her elderly mother. We recently learned that the client began working for a nursing company as a caregiver for the elderly. Is it the duty of the social services department to inform the nursing company of the client's past?

In its first response round ChatGPT mentions two areas of conflicting obligation, one of them Rights of the Individual:

> The patient in your care is a human being with rights, including the right to privacy. Previous abuse of her mother is not proof that she may harm others in the future, but her past can be an indication.

The other topic was company responsibility:

> As a social worker, it is your duty to maintain the health and safety of the people in your care as well as of the general public. Allowing a patient with a history of abuse to work in an environment where she may be a threat can pose a risk.

In its second round of responses, ChatGPT expanded on conflicting obligations in the social worker's Duty to the Client:

> As social workers, our primary responsibility is to our clients and their well-being. This includes respecting their right to privacy and confidentiality. In most cases, sharing information about a client's past, especially when it involves accusations that have not led to convictions, would breach the client's confidentiality.

And in Duty to Ensure Safety:

> At the same time, social workers also have a duty to ensure the safety of vulnerable populations such as the elderly. If you have concrete evidence that the client poses a significant risk to the elderly individuals under her care due to her past behavior, it is your ethical obligation to take action.

Referring to the legal aspects

Legal aspects were mentioned in 60% of the Ethics Committee's responses to questions surrounding ethical dilemmas. In its first round of responses ChatGPT did not mention the legal aspect at all. In its second round, ChatGPT mentioned the social worker's legal obligations in 28% of its responses. As an example, concerning question #4 (regarding a pregnant wife and her husband who smokes marijuana) the Ethics Committee responded to the social worker's query about reporting the husband's drug-smoking as a potential danger to the unborn child, referred to section 8 of the Israeli Social Worker Act, 1996-5447 which says:

> The obligation to maintain confidentiality is one of the cornerstones of the therapist-patient relationship and is anchored not only in the rules of ethics but also and especially in the Social Workers Act (Section 8). The obligation to maintain confidentiality precedes any requirement imposed on an employee by his employers, unless otherwise provided by law.

ChatGPT, in response to the same question #4, did not mention legal obligation in its first round of responses, but in the second round it did note:

> Be aware of any legal obligations in your jurisdiction regarding reporting substance use during pregnancy. In some places, there may be laws that require healthcare professionals to report substance use during pregnancy, and social workers may need to comply with these laws.

In another example, ChatGPT, in its first response to question #1, did not mention legal obligation, but did so in its second round of responses:

> Be aware of your legal obligations in Israel regarding mandatory reporting. If the law requires you to report specific information related to elder abuse or the client's fitness to work as a caregiver, you must comply with those legal requirements. You must disclose only the necessary information.

Clear guidance and recommendations

All the answers provided by the Ethics Committee were clearer in a way that allowed the social worker to act compared to ChatGPT. ChatGPT (in both rounds) did not provide an unequivocal answer on how to proceed, leaving it to the social worker to determine how to act and/or contact the legal advisor or director. However, ChatGPT was more adept than the Ethics Committee in expanding the considerations and risks that the social worker must consider in resolving the ethical dilemma, and more so in its second round of responses vs. the first.

For example, the Ethics Committee received a question from a social worker employed by a government agency whose client was a man working in a (non-nursing) auxiliary capacity in a nursing facility. He was the sole breadwinner of his family and sometimes worked the overnight shift. Despite his being late to work on several occasions, his employers evaluated his performance as commendable. The client approached the social worker because of an alcohol drinking problem and was recommended to enter a treatment centre for his addiction. The centre then recommended hospitalisation for rehab, but he refused, fearing that his absence from work would cause him to lose his job. He also claimed that he does not drink at work or during work hours. The social worker asked the Ethics Committee whether he has a duty to tell his supervisors at work about his client's drinking problem (Question #9).

The Ethics Committee responded by first detailing the social worker's conflicting obligations and then recommended not to violate the clients' confidentiality:

> There is no reporting obligation by law, and at the level of a reporting authority, based on the therapist's discretion, it is recommended not to report. The expected level of harm to the patient from reporting exceeds the

> level of future risk of not reporting. At the same time, it is recommended at the professional level to find a way to treat the problem of drinking not by means of hospitalization but in an ambulatory capacity so that the patient will benefit from detoxification treatment and the continuity of his work will not be affected.

ChatGPT in both rounds of response had a more general recommendation for the social worker:

> If you assess that there is a risk to public safety or other people within the framework of the patient's work, you are required to consult and consider involving his superiors. If there is no apparent risk, it is worth maintaining the confidentiality of the client (response #1).

Response #2 was also in general terms:

> In summary, the decision to share information about the client's drinking problem with his supervisors should be based on a careful and ethical assessment of the situation. While respecting the principle of confidentiality, it is essential to prioritize the client's well-being and safety. If there are immediate risks to job performance, safety, or the welfare of residents, and if all other avenues of support and intervention have been exhausted, it may be ethically justifiable to share relevant information with the client's supervisors, but with the client's informed consent whenever possible. Ultimately, the goal should be to assist the client in accessing the necessary treatment and support while minimizing any potential negative consequences on his employment.

It should be noted that ChatGPT's second response, unlike its first response, detailed the conflicting obligations in this specific dilemma – confidentiality of clients and protecting the public, as well as other considerations the social worker must consider before reaching a decision, including risk assessment:

> Conduct a thorough risk assessment to assess the impact of the client's alcohol use on his work performance, safety and general well-being. Assess whether there are immediate concerns related to the performance of his work or the safety of the residents in the nursing facility.

Informed consent:

> Engage in open and honest communication with the client about the potential consequences of his alcohol use on his work and general life. Discuss the benefits of addiction treatment and the risks of not treating the problem.

Support and referral:

> Provide information about available support services, including addiction treatment options and resources that may help the client address his drinking problem without jeopardizing his job security.

And Disclosure:

> Act in the best interests of the client by considering alternative solutions that may suit his treatment needs while minimizing the impact on his employment. This could include discussions with his superiors, seeking reasonable accommodations or considering the possibility of medical leave.

ChatGPT also recommended that the social worker document his/her decision-making process:

> Keep clear and accurate records of your client interactions including your risk assessment, discussions and any decisions made regarding disclosure. Documentation is essential for ethical and legal reasons.

Another example is the Ethics Committee's answer to question #1 (the client in a mental health facility who is now employed as a caregiver for the elderly although she herself was accused in the past of physically and mentally abusing her mother):

> According to ethics rules, it is forbidden to transfer information about clients other than in exceptional cases. In this case the responsibility for employing caregivers falls on the nursing-care company which must supervise the caregiver's work. As long as no complaint is received about the performance of this specific daughter-caregiver and assuming that her work is under supervision, there is no room for intervention. There is a possibility that the daughter-caregiver's acts of abuse of her mother are related to a difficult relationship between them and this should not affect her attitude and behavior towards other people for whom she cares. In the opinion of the members of the Committee, the obligation of confidentiality is preferable in this case and therefore the transfer of the information should be avoided.

The first of the two responses by ChatGPT specified the conflicting obligations involved in this question and then recommended to the social worker:

> Contact the department director or an ethics consultant at your institution to bring the issue up for discussion. If it turns out that there is a real risk to elderly patients, consider indirectly informing the company that supplied the caregiver, without revealing the client's personal details, so that it can examine the employee's suitability for the job. We understand the moral and ethical crisis you are in, and hope that you will find the right way to act for the general good of all parties involved. In its second attempt, once again after detailing the conflicting obligations, ChatGPT expanded its response, suggesting that the social worker consider legal obligations[1], informed consent[2], documentation[3] and consultation with supervisor and colleagues:

> Before taking any action, it is essential to conduct a thorough assessment of the situation. If you believe there is a genuine and imminent risk to elderly individuals, consider consulting with your supervisor, a colleague, or an expert in mental health and ethics to ensure that your decision is well-informed and justified.

And finally, the recommendation is general:

> In summary, there is no mandatory requirement to inform the caregiver company about your client's past, especially if it involves unproven allegations. However, if you genuinely believe there is an imminent risk to the elderly individuals your client is caring for, and if the law requires it, you should take appropriate steps to ensure the safety of the elderly care receivers while respecting your client's rights and privacy.

Discussion

Several key findings have been presented in this discussion regarding the responses of ChatGPT vs. the Israeli social workers' Ethics Committee to ethical dilemmas in social work. We analyzed these findings on the issues of identification of conflicting obligations, consideration of legal aspects, and provision of clear guidance to the social worker.

In both response rounds, ChatGPT identified conflicting obligations in 100% of responses, highlighting them more prominently in the second round of responses. There is a clear awareness of the ethical dimensions of the dilemmas presented, demonstrating that ChatGPT's algorithm recognises and addresses conflicting obligations within ethical situations; ChatGPT also offered a more in-depth discussion of ethics and professional boundaries, and a consideration of multiple values and obligations within ethical situations. Increasing the focus on conflicting obligations in ethical dilemmas reflects best practices in ethical decision-making (Congress, 2000; Reamer, 2018).

Legal aspects were mentioned more often in the Ethics Committee's answers; ChatGPT did not mention legal obligations at all in its first round of responses but did address legal aspects in 28% of the second round of answers. This indicates that ChatGPT improved its incorporation of the legal framework involved in ethical dilemmas in its later round of responses.

The Ethics Committee consistently provided clear and action-oriented guidance to social workers, allowing them to make informed decisions and plan a course of action. ChatGPT did not provide unequivocal answers in either attempt, instead offering general guidance and considerations for the social worker to contemplate.

However, ChatGPT's second round of responses did focus more on the considerations and risks that the social worker must weigh when resolving ethical dilemmas. It included recommendations related to risk assessment, informed consent, documentation, and consultation with supervisors and colleagues. These are some of the steps involved in resolving ethical dilemmas. This demonstrates ChatGPT's capacity for improved decision-support in complex ethical scenarios (Congress, 2000; Reamer, 2018).

Conclusions

The findings of the current study on ChatGPT's response to ethical dilemma response in the realm of social work, provides important insight into both the capabilities and limitations of ChatGPT when

applied to ethical decision-making contexts. Our study represents a first step in assessing the potential of ChatGPT as a support for resolving ethical dilemmas. In ChatGPT's second round of responses, the website provided more detailed answers to the question of conflicting obligations and offered the social worker advice on a variety of considerations that must be taken into account in an ethical dilemma.

However, as of today, ChatGPT cannot replace the expertise of a human ethics committee in tackling these ethical dilemmas. While ChatGPT provided more detailed answers and consistently identified the conflicting ethical principles in the dilemmas presented, its responses tended to be more general in nature, usually lacking specifically actionable advice. In contrast, the ethics committee's responses provided clearer guidance that the social worker could directly apply in practice.

Furthermore, in its responses, ChatGPT did not always identify the relevant legal considerations which are a crucial element in ethical decision-making in social work. The ethics committee, however, frequently cited specific laws and regulations in its responses, demonstrating the members' expertise in navigating the legal aspects of ethical dilemmas.

Still, ChatGPT can be very useful in helping social workers understand the complexity of making informed ethical decisions. ChatGPT can serve as a vital source of information amidst an ethical dilemma, assisting the social worker in his/her grasp of the issues that must be considered as well as the action that should be taken to make an informed decision. It is important to note that, according to the research, ChatGPT appears to be showing promising progress in its ability to support ethical decision-making in social work. Of course, another advantage of AI such as ChatGPT is its constant and immediate availability when a legal advisor or a response from an Ethics Committee may not be as readily available to the social worker.

ChatGPT's answers will be more accurate if they are matched to the specific country's ethical code and the laws that govern social workers in that country. The development of the application or website should be based on that country's ethical code, its laws, and procedures. To clarify the importance of the application's development, imagine the scenario of a librarian (GPT) in the library with books from all over the world. The customer (Chat) asks the librarian a question and she searches for the answer in the world library. The customer does not know which books she turns to for the answer to the question. Similarly, we are sending the 'app' to search the books relevant to the question, in our case, a question in the area of social work.

The research findings have implications for the training and guidance of social workers in the field of ethics and the use of technology. As previous studies have shown, the integration of technology into social work curricula is critical for preparing professionals capable of coping with ethical challenges in the digital age (Asakura et al., 2020). The potential of ChatGPT to support the resolution of ethical dilemmas, as found in the current study, suggests that artificial intelligence tools can serve as a valuable educational resource for students and social workers alike.

Therefore, it is important to incorporate practical experience with ChatGPT as a decision support tool when dealing with ethical dilemmas even in the training stages of social work students. Practicing the use of these technologies in a controlled learning environment will allow students to develop a deeper understanding of the potential and limitations of ChatGPT and acquire skills for responsible and informed use of these tools in future practice.

In spite of the advantages inherent in the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in the therapeutic professions, there is no denying that AI use brings with it complex ethical questions including the limits of its use. Is there a point where the use of AI can harm the freedom of thought of humans? There is also a debate as to whether or not the use of AI, especially in the field of treatment, can cause harm to the informed consent, confidentiality, and privacy of patients (Hodgson et al., 2021).

In addition, there are many challenges that need to be addressed when using AI for legal and ethical decision-making. As Ray (2023) mentioned, these challenges include biases, limited expertise in a specific field, and inaccurate and misleading information. It is important to recognise that ChatGPT's model is based on statistical patterns in its practice data, which may lead to biases or overgeneralisations, and therefore, to combine human supervision with AI, especially in making ethical

decisions and tackling ethical dilemmas in social work. ChatGPT's responses should be critically evaluated by the social worker who takes into account the specific context and utilises his/her professional expertise.

Additionally, it is possible that ChatGPT's database is drawn from social work sources that are culturally sensitive to only one region or society and do not necessarily reflect the society in which social workers work. It is possible that ChatGPT is not sufficiently 'aware' of cultural differences as they pertain to client privacy, confidentiality, boundaries, informed consent, the right to self-determination, etc. Therefore, ChatGPT may generate advice that is not sufficiently nuanced.

In light of the current research findings and the limitations of ChatGPT, we recommend several actions to deal with the risks associated with using ChatGPT. First, using ChatGPT as a starting point for discussion and reflection in social work team meetings and practice during student training, and not as the sole source for decision-making. In addition, we suggest that during their training, social workers and students be taught to identify potential biases and limitations of artificial intelligence systems while emphasising the importance of critical thinking and independent decision-making when dealing with ethical issues and avoiding over-reliance on technology. Future training should also include opportunities for in-depth discussion of the ethical implications of artificial intelligence in practice and provide tools for the evaluation and responsible use of artificial intelligence tools. Secondly, a clear protocol should be developed for the responsible integration of AI into ethical decision-making processes.

We would like to see other research studies comparing ChatGPT's responses with human experts in the field of law such as lawyers and social workers. Such a comparison will allow identifying gaps and limitations in the system's responses and assist in developing more accurate and effective prompts for ChatGPT. Moreover, collaboration between experts in law, social work, and technology can lead to innovative and integrated approaches to dealing with ethical dilemmas, leveraging the potential of artificial intelligence while preserving human professional judgment. Finally, due to the possibility of cultural biases in ChatGPT's responses, a follow-up study would be valuable for examining the use of ChatGPT in dilemmas involving cultural differences.

Limitations of the study

The study is impacted by two main limitations. First, the research was conducted based on a relatively small number of questions (14) previously addressed to the ethics committee. These 14 issues obviously do not represent all ethical dilemmas in the field. Second, ChatGPT is a new and developing technology. Over time, it is possible that its answers will improve. Thus, the performance of the system should be evaluated from time to time.

Notes

1. Be aware of your legal obligations in Israel regarding mandatory reporting. If the law requires you to report specific information related to elder abuse or your client's fitness to work as a caregiver, you must follow those legal requirements while ensuring that you disclose only the necessary information.
2. Whenever possible, engage in a dialogue with your client about the situation. Explain the limits of confidentiality during the therapeutic process and discuss the potential consequences of not disclosing relevant information to a caregiver company. Seek your client's informed consent to share specific information if it becomes necessary.
3. Maintain clear and detailed documentation of your interactions with the client, your assessments, and any decisions made regarding sharing information. This documentation will be essential in case there are legal or ethical inquiries in the future.

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