Ethics & Morality · GS - IV

An endangered tribe has developed a severe skeletal deformity. A university research has identified a mineral supplement as a possible remedy, though clinical trials are yet to be conducted. Should the District Magistrate (DM) use this research on the tribe? Discuss from the perspective of medical and administrative ethics.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2026	GS - IV	Ethics & Morality

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Medical ethics, informed consent, precautionary principle, beneficence, non-maleficence, vulnerable groups, clinical trials, administrative responsibility

Model Answer

Introduction

The suffering of an endangered tribe creates a compelling humanitarian concern, but urgency cannot justify exposing vulnerable people to an unproven medical intervention.

1. Medical Ethics

Beneficence requires relieving suffering, whereas non-maleficence requires avoiding foreseeable harm. Since clinical trials are incomplete, the supplement's efficacy, dosage and adverse effects remain uncertain.

2. Ethical Autonomy

Members of the tribe must not become involuntary subjects of experimentation. Genuine informed consent requires understandable information about risks, uncertainties and alternatives.

3. Administrative Ethics

The DM has a duty to protect vulnerable citizens and uphold evidence-based public health. Administrative discretion cannot substitute for scientific and regulatory approval.

4. Appropriate Course

The DM should urgently facilitate approved clinical research, expert consultation, nutritional assessment and safe alternatives while ensuring monitoring and informed participation.

Conclusion

Compassion should accelerate ethical research, not bypass safeguards. The remedy should be used only after appropriate scientific and regulatory validation.

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