

# INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN PATIENT CARE

## 2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the main standards that safeguard human rights in patient care internationally and examines how United Nations (UN) treaty-monitoring bodies have interpreted these standards. The chapter is divided into three sections. The first section describes key international sources governing human rights in patient care. The second examines patients' rights and includes subsections that discuss the standards and relevant interpretations connected to a particular right (e.g., right to privacy) within three particularly common health-related contexts: mental health, infectious diseases, and sexual and reproductive rights. These subsections provide examples of potential violations based on UN treaty-monitoring body observations and case law. It is worth underscoring here that these three contexts are used as examples and that human rights violations (and therefore, the application of human rights standards) can occur beyond this limited set of patient care-related contexts. The third section focuses on the rights of health care providers. This last section includes subsections that discuss the standards and relevant interpretations connected to a particular right from UN treaty-monitoring bodies, as well as relevant case law.

The standards addressed in each of these sections include binding treaties, such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and non-binding instruments developed by the UN and other entities, such as the World Medical Association's Declaration of Lisbon on the Rights of the Patient.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>World Medical Association [WMA]. Declaration on the Rights of the Patient. September/October 1981.