



*Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri*

## **NATIONAL BIOETHICS COMMITTEE**

### **THE ETHICS COMMITTEES**

(27<sup>th</sup> February 1992)

*abstract*

The NBC considers the ethics committees to be an important instrument for the study and promotion of appropriate ethical principles for the exercise of clinical trials and more strictly healthcare. The role played by the ethics committees can concern both the protection of the rights of sick persons, carried out in the respect of professional competences, and the professional training of healthcare staff.

The opinion recommends the setting up of two types of ethics committees, one at a local level and the other at a regional level, with different functions. The local committees should be called upon as a consulting body on the definition of biomedical research protocols, including clinical trials on man, and should be flexible in their composition according to the needs of the healthcare centre and local community. The regional committees should on the other hand work as consultancy organs for the city and regional councils, for all the healthcare initiatives of the region, the regional legislative activity and the administration attaining to the field of assistance and medical research. The analysis of the juridical nature of the ethical committees seems to be of particular importance, which in line of principle can be considered non-recognised associations. The opinion urges for legislation that makes the institution of these bodies obligatory, for the purposes of conferring rationality to the organization of the ethics committees and authority to the opinions expressed by them. For the legislator the possibility is not excluded of foreseeing the creation of ethical committees in the shape of collective administrative bodies, operating in the healthcare management of hospitals or in the scientific direction of research institutes.