

BIOÉTHIQUE MEDICAL ETHICS BIOÉTHIQUE MEDICAL ETHICS BIOÉTHIQUE  
FIRST REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON BIOMEDICAL ETHICS IN MEDICAL SCHOOLS  
Organized by The Salim El-Hoss Bioethics and Professionalism Program at AUB-FM

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Reported by Thalia ARAWI\*

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In 2003, the World Medical Association proclaimed that a global Medical Ethics Day will be observed every September 18. On the occasion of that day, the Salim El-Hoss Bioethics and Professionalism Program at the American University of Beirut Faculty of Medicine, and under the leadership of its Director, Dr. Thalia Arawi, organized the first Regional Conference entitled "Biomedical Ethics in Medical Schools: A Regional Perspective" on September 17-18, 2010, at the Gefinor Rotana Hotel in Beirut.

This conference was held in partial sponsorship with the UNESCO Cairo office and in collaboration with the Cleveland Clinic. Dr. Mohammad Sayegh, Vice President for Medical Affairs and Dean of Medicine, launched the conference with a speech after which the keynote address was delivered by Dr. Howard Brody, Director of the Institute for the Medical Humanities at the University of Texas Medical Branch (Galveston, Texas). The conference included a series of presentations by physicians from different areas in the region (Qatar, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Kuwait, Sudan, Lebanon and others) during which they presented their experience in the teaching of biomedical ethics. A workshop by Dr. Richard Frankel from Indiana University on the importance of Narrative Ethics was also part of the conference. Towards the end, a meeting was held setting the basis for the founding of the first Biomedical Ethics Society in the Arab World and the Region.

### UNESCO's Activities on Bioethics in the Arab Region

DR. ORIO IKEBE

UNESCO Cairo Office is functioning as a focal point for UNESCO's projects on bioethics and ethics of science and technology for the Arab region. We are assisting Member States in capacity building to address ethical issues raised along the progress of scientific and medical

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research and their applications. UNESCO has been working on emerging issues such as ethics of human cloning, human embryo research and germline intervention, ethical concern of human genome research and the usage of human genetic data.

One of the activities that UNESCO is currently working on is promotion of bioethics education in the framework of the global project of Ethics Education Programme (EEP). We provide technical assistance for establishing bioethics courses and for that purpose, a publication on "Bioethics: Core Curriculum" is produced in six UN official languages which can be used as a reference by medical schools and universities that wish to establish bioethics courses.

We also promote exchange of information through the system of databases concerned with ethics called Global Ethics Observatory (GEObs) which contains information on experts, institutions, teaching programs, regulations, code of conducts and online materials in the field of bioethics and ethics of science and technology.

In the field of bioethics, the Member States of UNESCO have adopted three declarations namely "Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights (1997)", "International Declaration on Human Genetic Data (2003)", and "Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights (2005)" which are important references for promoting universally agreed principles concerning bioethical issues.

However, one of the challenges in promoting bioethics is to understand how cultural and religious aspects in each country are influencing on actual interpretation and implementation of universal principles into practice. Through conducting research and promoting dialogues at the regional and international levels among experts from various fields, UNESCO is trying to identify specific needs in the region to strengthen the system of addressing bioethical issues with full respect to human dignity and human rights.

### Challenges to Medical Ethics Teaching A U.S. Perspective

DR. HOWARD BRODY

The move, since 1970, to incorporate medical ethics into the standard medical school curriculum in the U.S. has by most measures been remarkably successful. Nevertheless, challenges remain. Many of the challenges can be related to the question of how medical ethics fits within the field called "medical humanities." The historical roots of medical humanities within Western European culture may be

useful in indicating why medical ethics can find a comfortable home within the medical humanities, and what the goals of teaching it to medical students ought to be.

### **Jordanian Health Sciences Students' Knowledge, Attitude and Practice about Clinical Research and Ethical Considerations**

DR. MAYYADA WAZAIFY

The field of Clinical Research has witnessed rapid growth in Jordan with the establishment of the Jordan Food and Drug Administration (JFDA) in 2003 and the foundation of the Clinical Research law in 2001. With the absence of any study investigating knowledge and attitude of the public in Jordan regarding clinical studies, it seemed indispensable to start exploring this area.

The aim of this study is to explore the knowledge and attitude of health sciences students at the University of Jordan (JU) towards Clinical Research studies and relevant ethical considerations.

This study adopts the survey methodology using a self-administered questionnaire. A questionnaire of 28 questions with pre-formulated answers is being handed out using a stratified random sampling technique to a target sample of 250 students of the health sciences faculties. The questionnaire was piloted on a sample (n = 11) of students and modifications were made accordingly. The data collected is being analyzed by the SPSS® database-version 17.

To date, a total sample of 224 students of all target faculties was obtained; Medicine (n = 48), Dentistry (n = 29), Pharmacy (n = 50), Nursing (n = 50) and 47 from Rehabilitation Sciences. A primary evaluation of the results showed that a total of 137 students (61%) were acquainted with the term CRS. The main source from which they first heard about CRS was university courses or seminars (61%), followed by radio, television or Internet (22%). Equal number of students thought CRS to be ethical as those who thought it is completely unethical. Only 92 (41.4%) declared that they would feel comfortable to participate in a CRS conducted in Jordan.

Provisional data of this research highlights the lack of knowledge about clinical research and ethical considerations among health sciences students at JU. There is a need for more research in this direction and more effort to be directed towards increasing the awareness of the general public about clinical research.

### **Medical Ethics Curriculum, 6<sup>th</sup> Year Undergraduate Medical Studies in King Fahd Medical College (KFMC)**

DR. ABDULAZIZ ALKAABBA

Despite the fact that the history of medical education has spanned 2500 years, it has only been in the last 30 years that medical ethics has come of age by being formally included in medical curricula. By 1990, medical ethics had become an integral part of the core curriculum in most

American medical schools. At present, most medical schools in the UK also include medical ethics as part of their education curriculum.

In Saudi Arabia (KSA), we have only begun teaching medicine in the English language (and with Western methodology) within colleges in the past 40 years. Medical ethics were gradually introduced eight years ago through an Islamic methodology. As we know, teaching medical ethics to undergraduate students is not easy but rather, it is often challenging. In Saudi Arabia we have 15 medical colleges and unfortunately, only six of them teach medical ethics to their students. Among the six colleges teaching ethics, there is a focus not on medical ethics per se, but more on ethics relating to cultural Islamic ethics.

### **Medical Ethics in the Medical Curriculum: Ten Years Experience in the National Ribat University (NRU), Sudan**

DR. OMER MUSA

Since its establishment in year 2000 the faculty of medicine in NRU has adopted teaching a separate course on medical ethics and doctor's Islamic *fiqh* (rules). The objective of the course was to orient the medical students on the general concepts of medical ethics, legal responsibilities in medicine and the Islamic rules in different medical situations like: how to worship during illness, dissection, abortion, IVF, cloning, organ transplantation, etc.

The course is taught in three weeks (three credit hours) in the second semester. Experienced consultants and religious scholars contributed in teaching. The instructional methods adopted were lectures, problems, seminars and field visits. Evaluation methods included structured short answer questions (SSAQ), problems, MCQs, short essays and presentation assessment. For non-Muslims medical ethics was taught and they reflect the rules portrayed by their religion regarding the issues being discussed. Feedback questionnaire from the students was highly positive in relation to its importance, content, time, instructional and evaluation methods. The course has now been adopted in four national universities.

### **The Road Map for Introducing Ethics Education at Al-Azhar University**

DR. AHMED RAGAB

The first initiative in this regard was an international conference on "Bioethics in Human Reproduction Research in the Muslim World", which was organized by the center in Cairo, December 1991. The proceedings of the conference and the ethical guidelines on human reproduction research in the Muslim World were published in Arabic and English in 1992.

One major recommendation of the conference, which was successfully implemented by Al-Azhar University, was the formation of the first Research Ethics Committee in Al Azhar University. Several workshops were orga-

nized by the Center on ethical issues in assisted reproductive technology, cloning, medical ethics, ethics of medical information and medical advertisement. The proceedings of these workshops were published in Arabic, English and French.

The Center published a large number of publications on medical ethics and research in international journals and books and national journals.

The Center hosted two meetings of the FIGO Committee for Ethical Aspects of Human Reproduction and Women's Health in 1991 and 2000. The Center prepared a Bioethics curriculum and negotiated with the Dean and the Council of Al Azhar College of Medicine to include it in the curriculum of the College.

Negotiations were long and tedious and the proposal was rejected on the basis of the already overloaded curriculum, who will teach it, it is already being taught in various subjects, will it be compulsory or selective, etc. It was not till the director of the Center was appointed as the Dean of Faculty of Medicine that Bioethics curriculum was approved by the College and University Counsels and included in the curriculum in the year 2000. This represented a landmark in the teaching of Medical Ethics in Egypt.

#### **Teaching Experience of Medical Ethics at Kuwait University**

DR. MANAL BOUHAIMED

There is an international academic and clinical agreement among the medical profession that medical ethics should be taught at different levels to medical students, young residents and as a focus for continuous medical and professional education to qualified doctors. Different approaches to do this were proposed and applied in academic and clinical settings in Kuwait over the past 15 years. We hope to share our experience at Kuwait University focusing on clinical and research ethics education through using a SWOT analysis model.

#### **Medical Ethics Education in the Young Faculty of Medicine - University of Balamand**

DR. MICHEL DAHER

Recent advancements in medical technology and its implications have raised many ethical issues and dilemmas in clinical practice. Doctors of the 21<sup>st</sup> century need to be well aware and capable of dealing with all these ethical issues and dilemmas in order to provide a better care to patients and become independent decision makers for the well-being of their patients. For a long time, Medical Ethics & Bioethics were self taught by practitioners. Actually Medical Ethics & Bioethics course are taught in all Lebanese universities, although the content of the course can be essentially different.

Since its creation in 2002, the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Balamand started a core curriculum in Medical Ethics & Bioethics.

The course is designed to introduce the student to the ethical principles governing the medical profession. It encourages the medical student to focus on the person-patient behind the disease, rather than the illness itself.

These are the **main objectives** for the teaching of medical ethics:

- To gain familiarity with ethical issues in medical treatment and research.
- To teach doctors to recognize the humanistic and ethical aspects of the medical career.
- To enable doctors to examine and affirm their personal professional moral commitments.
- To equip doctors with a foundation of a philosophical, social and legal knowledge.
- To enable doctors to use this knowledge in clinical reasoning, and to equip them with the interaction skills needed to apply this insight, knowledge and reasoning to human clinical care.

Teaching methods include lectures, problem-based learning and debates, and case discussion. It is clear that both cognitive and behavioral aspects of ethics have to be taught. Learning materials available include PowerPoint presentation, articles and valuable websites.

It is necessary to have national guidelines on bioethics to guide research and development policies and development of bioethics education in Lebanon.

#### **Experience in Teaching Bioethics through a Course in Medical Law**

DR. NAGI SOUAIBY

The presentation addresses the need to include Bioethics in a global course on medical law for students of medicine as well as for residents, fellows and physicians (as CME). It also tackles the difference between the legal concerns which are the same for every physician and the philosophical concerns which are different following cultures, religion, etc.

#### **Medical Ethics at a Glance: The American University of Beirut**

DR. THALIA ARAWI

This presentation will offer a quick overview of the teaching of biomedical ethics as it takes place at the American University of Beirut Faculty of Medicine. In doing so, we will highlight the important role played by the formal, the informal and the hidden curriculum.

#### **Teaching Medical Ethics in Qatar University**

DR. ELSAYED DARWISH

With the rapid development of science, a growing concern about the ways in which humans use the knowledge they have gained is now shown. As a result of this growing concern, and of the increasing international impetus of teaching ethics, of providing students with an appropriate tool that can help them discuss the complex questions that

arise in their academic disciplines, within the academy, professional schools – medicine, law, business, computer science and journalism, for example – have reinvigorated their curricula with a renewed commitment to the teaching of ethics. Qatar University (QU) is not exceptional from that international trend. Ethics, Media Ethics, Pharmacy Ethics, Professional Ethics and Business Ethics are courses offered in QU in the respective colleges. As there is no school of Medicine in QU, no separate course of Medical Ethics is offered there, though there is one offered in Weill Cornell University (in Qatar).

Nevertheless, I have incorporated medical ethics in the course “Introduction to Philosophy” that I give in QU. Reasons for incorporating medical ethics in a philosophy course – though only few issues are being introduced given the available time and content assigned to these issues in the course – will be mentioned in my presentation. These issues are discussed with students in a way that can help them “deduce” the ethical principles that justify the ethical judgments regarding these issues, thus paving the way towards analyzing these principles. In a country like the State of Qatar, it is hard, if not impossible, to ignore the religious judgments of the different ethical issues. In my presentation I will show how these religious judgments are dealt with, using the critical thinking tools, thus getting students understand that these judgments are not sacred statements but “human interpretations” that can be subject to different understandings. Discussing also with students the other religions’ judgments of the same ethical issues helps students understand that though ethical principles can be universally accepted by people of different societies, cultures and religions, different interpretations of principles may, and do, exist, thus creating among students an atmosphere of tolerance. The relation between ethics and law is discussed as well and the legal status of the ethical issues is discussed with students in the same way the religious interpretations are explained as will be shown in the presentation.

### **Relationship between Virtue Ethics and Physician Professionalism**

DR. HOWARD BRODY

In the last 15 years, U.S. medical education has given increasing attention to “professionalism.” Among the various ethical theories and approaches, virtue ethics has been largely absent from medical school teaching. How-

ever, a proper understanding of professionalism in medicine, and how it can best be taught and nurtured, requires an understanding that “professionalism” is in fact an application of virtue ethics. We need therefore to better understand some key elements of virtue theory in order properly to teach professionalism.

### **The Secret of Patient-Centered Care is in Caring for the Relationship**

DR. RICHARD FRANKEL

The Institute of Medicine (IOM) has identified patient-centered care as one of six domains that define quality in health care. In essence, the IOM has asserted that relationships that lack a patient-centered focus may compromise quality. One question that educators, policymakers and the public are asking is, “How do we ensure that patient/relationship centeredness occurs in every aspect of the care process?” My talk will focus on three approaches to optimizing patient and relationship centeredness in education and in the clinical arena. They are: mindful practice, formation, and communication skills training. I will provide illustrations of each approach and the evidence that supports its use in enhancing patient/relationship centeredness.

### **Inside Out: Teaching Professionalism through Narratives of Lived Experience**

DR. RICHARD FRANKEL

This workshop will offer an “immersion” experience for participants based on an innovative educational approach to teaching professionalism that was instituted at the Indiana University School of Medicine five years ago. The approach uses narratives generated by students on their third year medicine rotation which are posted to a secure blog. The narratives from each month then become the focus of a small group teaching session in which professionalism issues are discussed. Participants will experience the approach through taking on the role of third-year students and will be provided with a set of narratives to work with. In addition, some of the stories become featured in the school’s weekly newsletter in a column entitled, “Mindfulness and Medicine”. I will illustrate how our organization attempts to create campus community by using narratives of professionalism and ethics at all levels.