

INTRODUCTION

We open this new year with new energy and renewed enthusiasm to continue promoting scientific research in bioethics through our journal.

Starting this year, we will try to increase the number of articles published per year in order to continue and ensure our current indexing and those to come in 2025.

That is why, in this issue we have published seven articles and a review and we have varied topics ranging from rigorous reflections that take up ethical and bioethical aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic that, four years later, have been analyzed more objectively, to innovative proposals on current topics of research and organ transplantation.

Thus, we open this issue with the collaboration of Dr. Joseph Tham who takes up again the reflection and analysis of the event of vaccination against COVID-19, highlighting the resistance of society in general to the vaccine on the one hand and, derived from the above, the polarization aroused among the same population as a result of the same.

Dr. Tham analyzes the factors that caused the distrust both in the pharmaceutical industry that generated the vaccines and, in the science, and governmental institutions that instructed people to get vaccinated, and does so in the light of the WHO SAGE document of 2014, where three factors were detected that discouraged the population from doing so: complacency, convenience and trust. The latter is the central object of the article and what leads the author to propose strengthening it through the implementation of reliable and transparent actions and policies, as well as effective and proven means of communication that bring society in general closer to the scientific field and generate bonds of trust.

The second article, by Professor Dávila, shares a philosophical reflection on the virtue of compassion from Aristotle to Nietzsche with the aim of bringing about a union between intelligence and compassion in the doctor-patient relationship caused, on the one hand, by a first component that he calls “compassionate listening” and a second that he calls “successful conversation”. These two elements, when present, achieve a “therapeutic alliance” in which both the physician and the patient seek and recognize each other as persons within the same relationship and both assume responsibilities for their own personal growth and development. For this reason, the author is committed to introducing compassion in the health field in order to achieve not only therapeutic help but also to accompany and empathize with the pain and suffering of patients in the understanding of a human and integral vision of the human person.

The third article by Dr. Reguera provides a novel analysis and reflection in that it explores the need for urgent ethical and legal regulation in the face of the scientific advance of embryoids; these are created from stem cells that replicate certain embryonic states to resemble human embryos and offer the possibility of experimenting with them, for example, aspects referring to their differentiation and cellular organization, even in three-dimensional structures.

However, despite its benefits, the author warns, it is necessary to regulate their ethical and legal status given their possibility of uterine implantation.

With respect to the above, Reguera shares that one of the greatest difficulties lies in the fact that the traditional limit of fourteen days to prohibit experimentation with embryos does not apply in the case of embryos, since they do not comply with these times as an authentic human embryo would. For this reason, it is urgent to regulate their creation, as well as the possible experimentation with them.

The following article presented in this issue by doctors Cabrera, Sánchez, Cerdio and Fernández, presents us, once again and as in previous issues, a novel and highly relevant proposal for bioethics in the Ibero-American region.

It is the creation and operation of the ORIBI (Observatory of the Ibero-American Bioethics Network) founded within the CADE-BI (Anahuac Center for Strategic Development in Bioethics) and which represents a laudable effort to monitor and link the different activities of research, dissemination and training in bioethics in the Ibero-American region.

From the natural interdisciplinary methodology of bioethics, ORIBI joins efforts to contribute to public debates on current bioethical issues, encouraging citizen participation for informed decision making.

Thus, ORIBI constitutes an epicenter for the generation of knowledge and collaboration networks, contributing to the strengthening of a bioethics culture in the region.

The fifth article, by Dr. Ortiz and Dr. Holzer, takes up a painful topic of the COVID-19 pandemic in Mexico, which is the relationship between the existing violence in the territory and the difficulties experienced by physicians attending in critical areas.

Based on surveys, the authors detected general information on physicians and their reasons for attending in difficult areas with exacerbated violence, as well as the effects of this on the provision of services, distribution of resources, patient selection through triage and public policies.

The results shared show an increase in physicians' moral distress as a consequence of the scarcity of resources exacerbated by the different forms of violence in the territory, as well as an adverse work environment that made their health care work difficult.

In addition, the authors analyze the fact that vaccines were not distributed equitably to all health personnel, but were prioritized to physicians in the public sector, leaving the private sector at double risk. This, in turn, generated adverse consequences for the welfare of health professionals.

The authors propose the construction of public safety policies that guarantee that physicians can perform their functions without risk and thus improve working conditions and that, at the same time,

contemplate justice in the distribution of resources and other improvements in the attention to health crises.

The sixth article by Dr. Palomares is equally proactive in that it recovers the importance of promoting reflective dialogue from the legal and bioethical fields regarding facial transplants, based on the fact that personal identity is a human right and that said transplant not only reconstructs a physical aspect of the person but also a personal and social identity, allowing them to successfully reintegrate into their environment.

Dr. Palomares recognizes the need for ethical and legal regulation of crucial issues such as the informed consent of both the donor and the recipient, highlighting bioethical principles such as the dignity of the person, his or her autonomy, non-discrimination and full and effective protection of his or her health.

The last article in this issue, by Dr. Herrera and Dr. Nebel, advances a public policy consideration that proposes the use of potassium chloride to abort fetuses over 20 weeks of gestation. The position of the authors is clearly against this practice, stating that it causes fetal pain and suffering.

With scientific evidence, the authors prove how the use of this substance to euthanize animals causes pain, being contrary to the aims of good medical practice, which should avoid suffering as a matter of principle. It is also recognized that the fetus has developed a nervous system that allows it to have sensations and that, therefore, it can be said that it feels pain.

The authors call for a scientifically supported discussion on existing public policies on abortion methods and to extend the right to maximum respect for human dignity to fetuses over 20 weeks of gestation, as well as to any fetus or embryo at any stage of its embryonic development.

Finally, we present here a review by Dr. Alberto Patiño, an expert in freedom of conscience. The book reviewed by authors Navarro Valls, Martínez Torrón and Valero is a comparative law analysis of the right to conscientious objection, included in the right to freedom of expression, in the practice of euthanasia in Spain.

According to Dr. Patiño, author of the review, conscientious objection, as the book shows, is restricted and may come into conflict with the now regulated crime of euthanasia, since the Spanish law provides for the obligatory registration of objectors who are previously identified, thus infringing on the right to freedom of expression.

Thus, with a professional but clear and concise language, Dr. Patiño introduces the desire to delve deeper into this book to learn more about the subject of conscientious objection in Spain.

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