

# The Journal of the Institute of Medical Ethics

The *Journal of Medical Ethics* was established in 1975, with a multidisciplinary editorial board, to promote the study of contemporary medico-moral problems. The editorial board has as its aims the encouragement of a high academic standard for this developing subject and the influencing of the quality of both professional and public discussion. The journal is published quarterly and includes papers on all aspects of medical ethics, analyses ethical concepts and theories and features case conferences and comment on clinical practice. It also contains book reviews.

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Papers submitted for publication should be sent in quadruplicate to: The Editor, *Journal of Medical Ethics*, 151 Great Portland Street, London W1N 5PB. Rejected manuscripts are not returned unless accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope, or international reply coupon. Papers should be in double-spaced typewriting on one side of the paper only. A total word count is appreciated. On a separate sheet a brief entry for 'Contributors to this issue' should be supplied, containing the title of the author's present post, degrees and/or professional qualifications, and any other relevant information.

Four copies of the journal will be sent to authors free of charge after their papers are published. Offprints of individual papers may be bought from Professional and Scientific Publications, Tavistock House East, Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9JR.

In March 1981 the *JME* adopted a simplified 'Vancouver style' for references: details are given in various issues including December 1983, p 234. They are also available from the editorial office. The full text of the 'Vancouver Agreement' was published in the *British Medical Journal* in 1982; volume 284; 1766-70. As the 'Vancouver style' is incompatible with the long established style of references for legal articles, lawyers should use their own standard style, but avoid abbreviations so as to facilitate reference by others. The journal is multidisciplinary and papers should be in clear jargon-free English, accessible to any intelligent reader.

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### Thematic review and index

The thematic review of past issues appears in the June issue each year and an index to each volume appears in the December issue.

## References

- (1) British Paediatric Association Working Party. Guidelines to aid ethical committees considering research involving children. *Archives of disease in childhood* 1980; 55: 75-77.
- (2) Council for International Organisations of Medical Sciences. *Proposed international guidelines for biomedical research involving human subjects*. Geneva: World Health Organisation, Council for International Organisations of Medical Sciences, 1982.
- (3) Rodin J. *Will this hurt?* London: Royal College of Nursing Research Monograph, 1983.
- (4) Smith M, Delves T, Lansdown R, Clayton B and Graham P. *The effects of lead exposure on urban children: the Institute of Child Health/Southampton study*. Supplement 47 to *Developmental medicine and child neurology*.

## Update

### Medical ethics courses

More than 200 people have already expressed interest in a new MA in the Philosophy of Health Care course which is to begin in October at the University of Wales. Applications have come from a wide variety of people, says Dr Donald Evans of the Department of Philosophy, 'from hospital consultants, pharmacists, administrators, psychiatrists and senior nursing staff - just the sort of spread we were hoping for'.

The course, which consists of a two-year scheme of part-time study, aims to provide practitioners and administrators in medicine and health care with the opportunity to examine the ethical and philosophical problems encountered in their disciplines.

Candidates will normally be graduates who are either medical doctors, clinical psychologists, paramedical staff (pharmacists, radiologists etc), hospital or health service administrators, medical social workers, medical researchers, senior nurses or lay members of health authorities.

The course will be taught by members of the Philosophy Department of University College, Cardiff with the co-operation of visiting experts who will include: Baroness Mary Warnock, Professor Alan Maynard of the University of York and Dr Raanan Gillon, editor of the *Journal of*

*Medical Ethics*. The curriculum will cover: Philosophy, morality and health care; Administration of health care; The doctor-patient relationship; Patient perspectives; Reproductive medicine; Medical and scientific research; Death and treatment of the dying; Health and disease; Drugs, and Mental illness.

The fee is £411 per year and anyone interested in learning more about the course should contact: Dr Donald Evans, PO Box 78, Cardiff CF1 1XL.

- The Centre of Medical Law and Ethics at King's College, London established a Postgraduate Diploma course in Medical Ethics and Law in 1984. The course lasts for a year and is open to graduates in medicine, philosophy, law or any other relevant disciplines. To obtain the diploma, awarded by King's College, candidates must pass an examination in June and complete a 12,000 word (approximately) thesis by September. The course is aimed principally, but not exclusively, at those who are already professionally involved in ethical and legal issues arising out of the practice of medicine.

The aim of the course is to expose an increasing number of professionals to a rigorous and stimulating discipline which will equip them to meet the growing demand for expertise in the area and to help to train others, whether nurses, medical students, administrators, hospital chaplains, etc.

Further information may be obtained from The Secretary, Centre of Medical Law and Ethics, King's College, London WC2.

teacher who writes and lectures in the area of psychology of religion. Her address is 19 Durham Road, London N2 9DP.

## References

- (1) Reich W. Psychiatric diagnosis as an ethical problem. In: Bloch S, Chodoff P, eds. *Psychiatric ethics*. Oxford University Press, 1981: 61–88.
- (2) Balint M. *The doctor, his patient, and the illness*. New York: International Universities Press, 1957.
- (3) Scheff T. *Being mentally ill: a sociological theory*. Chicago: Aldine, 1966.
- (4) Levene H I. Acute schizophrenia; clinical effects of the labelling process. *Archives of general psychiatry* 1971; 25: 215–222.
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- (6) Ingleby D, ed. *Critical psychiatry*. London: Penguin Books, 1981.
- (7) Baruch G, Treacher A. *Psychiatry observed*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978.
- (8) Clare A. *Psychiatry in dissent*. (2nd ed) London: Tavistock, 1980: 76–117.
- (9) See reference (1): 77–81.
- (10) Coate M. *Beyond all reason*. London: Constable, 1964: 181.
- (11) Goffman, E. *Asylums*. New York: Doubleday, 1981: 125–169.
- (12) See reference (1): 81.
- (13) Rosenhan D I. On being sane in insane places. *Science* 1973; 179: 250–258.
- (14) See reference (1): 350–352.
- (15) See reference (1): 77–84.
- (16) Sacks O W. *Awakenings*. Harmondsworth: Pelican Books, 1976.

## Update

### New nursing ethical committee

A new ethics group, The North Wales Nursing Ethical Committee, lists its aims and objectives as:

- 1) To advise, review and monitor ethical issues in nursing research in North Wales.
- 2) To advise, review and monitor ethical issues related to nursing and nurses in North Wales.
- 3) To advise, review and monitor ethical issues related to nursing and the nurse's role within the wider concept of health-care delivery.
- 4) To advise and explore ways in which nurses could be supported when faced with ethical dilemmas in health care.

- 5) To advise, review and monitor the educational input of ethics in nurse educational programmes.
- 6) To advise, review and monitor the patient's or client's role and view when faced with health-care decisions, particularly those related to nursing.
- 7) To encourage the development and review the resources on the subject of ethics, particularly the updating of a relevant bibliography.
- 8) To demonstrate to the community in North Wales that nursing has a facility for critically examining ethical issues related to nursing and client health-care.
- 9) To establish links with other relevant ethical committees, particularly the medical committees in North Wales.
- 10) To advise the health authorities in North Wales and relevant nursing and midwifery committees on ethical matters relating to nursing and nursing research.

demands of internal peace. Aristotle faces the same problem that Plato faced with his similar conception of justice as mental health: there is no reason to assume that acting *morally* (notably towards others) will coincide with being or becoming *well* (medically speaking).

We can only speculate how Aristotle might have spelt out a properly nuanced relation between health and morality. One possible approach might be precisely through that facet of Aristotle's ethics that has, in itself, least to do with human nature, and even with other men. It is man's privilege to be able to transcend his own nature: 'We must not follow those who advise us, being men, to think of human things, and, being mortal, of mortal things, but must, so far as we can, make ourselves immortal, and strain every nerve to live in accordance with the best thing in us' (1177b31ff). This is theoretical reason, which is shared with the gods, and hence cannot be essentially supervenient upon matter (even if *we* exercise it with the aid of physically dependent images). The ultimate object of its contemplation is Aristotle's own god, the unmoved Prime Mover, whose unending and unchanging mental life the intelligences that direct the heavenly bodies imitate as best they can in unending and continuous motion. Now it is a problem for Aristotle (as, perhaps, for any religious thinker) how to reconcile the claims of private contemplation and social morality. But it is plausible that love of God, not being itself an egocentric or self-referential attitude, should inspire a wish not only to imitate God oneself, but that others should imitate him also. So through loving contemplation of God I will come to desire continuous

activity, and the psycho-physical stability that underlies it, not only for myself, but for others as well. This should motivate me to act in ways that not only express my own internal well-being, but also generate or perpetuate the same in others. Such action is more likely to be specifically moral action.

The reader may be disconcerted that, even on such a central issue, interpretation of Aristotle should be speculation. But that is certainly a feature of Aristotle's ethics as we have them, and may well be a feature of ethical theory as he conceived it: 'Our discussion will be adequate', he remarks, 'if it has as much clearness as the subject-matter admits of' (1094b11f). Aristotle does less to answer practical questions than to explore the nature, at once rational and physiological, of the species that can never make an end of asking them.

*A W Price is College Lecturer in Philosophy until October 1986 at Wadham College, Oxford OX1 3PN. He was educated at Oxford and has been a Lecturer in Philosophy at the University of York since 1972. He has published a few articles on ethics, ancient and modern.*

## Bibliography

- Aristotle. *Nicomachean ethics*. Translated by Ross W D. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1925. Ackrill J L. Aristotle on eudaimonia. *Proceedings of the British Academy* 60, 1974.
- Wiggins D. Deliberation and practical reason. In: Raz J, ed. *Practical reasoning*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978.
- Jaeger W. Aristotle's use of medicine as model of method in his ethics. *Journal of Hellenic studies* 1957, 77.
- Tracy T J. *Physiological theory and the doctrine of the mean in Plato and Aristotle*. The Hague: Mouton, 1969.

## Cumulative index

Some interest has been expressed in a cumulative index for the *Journal of Medical Ethics* 1975–84 (Volumes 1 to 10 inclusive).

Would any readers interested in purchasing such an index please write to the editor indicating the maximum sum they would be prepared to pay for it. If there is sufficient interest a proposal will be actively pursued.

## Medical groups

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Medical groups associated with the Institute of Medical Ethics have been established in British university teaching hospitals. Each academic year they arrange programmes of lectures and symposia on issues raised by the practice of medicine which concern other disciplines. Although these programmes are addressed primarily to medical, nursing and other hospital students they are open to all members of the medical, nursing and allied professions. There is no fee for attendance. Lecture lists are available by direct application to the appropriate co-ordinating secretary named above. A stamped addressed A4 envelope would be appreciated.

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The institute has been set up by the Society for the Study of Medical Ethics as a centre for research, education and information. It is financed by grants from charitable and government sources and from members' subscriptions.

The Institute of Medical Ethics is an independent, non-partisan organisation for the multidisciplinary study of medico-moral issues raised by the practice of medicine.

The institute aims to influence the quality of both professional and public discussion of medico-moral questions; to promote the study of medical ethics; to ensure a high academic standard for this developing subject; to encourage a multidisciplinary approach to discussion of the consequences of clinical practice; to stimulate research in specific problems, and to remain non-partisan and independent of all interest groups and lobbies.

The institute undertakes research on medico-moral questions, sponsors a major educational programme and provides an information service for members.

So far two reports have been published on: *The Ethics of Resource Allocation in Health Care* by Kenneth Boyd and *Dilemmas of Dying* by Ian Thompson.

Both are published by the Edinburgh University Press. Future reports will cover the ethics of clinical research investigations on children; public and professional attitudes to medical ethics, and teaching medical ethics.

The institute derives from the London Medical Group, a student group for the study of issues raised by the practice of medicine which, since 1963, has arranged a comprehensive programme of lectures and symposia on medico-moral issues raised by the practice of medicine. Similar groups associated with the institute have been established in university teaching hospitals at Aberdeen, Birmingham, Bristol, Cambridge, Cardiff, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Leeds, Leicester, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, Oxford, Sheffield and Southampton.

Membership of the institute is open to all those who work in the medical and allied professions or who have an interest in medical ethics. Members receive a monthly briefing on current developments, the *Bulletin of the Institute of Medical Ethics*.

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