

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 some brief biographical details should be supplied, including the title of the author's present post, degrees and/or professional qualifications, (if any) 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 1986. 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.

Notice to subscribers

The *Journal of Medical Ethics* is published quarterly. The annual subscription rates are £33.00 in the United Kingdom and Irish Republic, and £50.00 in all countries overseas. US direct \$70.00. Payment for overseas subscriptions should be made in sterling, payable to Professional and Scientific Publications/JME A/c. Orders can also be placed locally with any leading subscription agent or bookseller. (For the convenience of readers in the USA subscription orders, with or without payment, can also be sent to: Professional and Scientific Publications, *British Medical Journal*, Box No 560B, Kennebunkport, Maine 04046. All enquiries, however, must be addressed to the publisher in London). All enquiries regarding air mail rates, single copies, advertisements, etc, should be sent to: Professional and Scientific Publications, Tavistock House East, Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9JR.

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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.

The means by which society provides for these rights will be geared to society's acceptance of them, and as I said above, I do not think this can or should be an arbitrary overriding of beliefs, even if they are held by a minority. One of the problems of such situations is that it is only the holders of extreme beliefs who commonly express them; the majority of society is generally inarticulate, and we have very poor means of assessing its opinions. Some societies very close to ours have instituted the mandatory request for organ donation, laying the onus of asking upon the medical attendants in the final illness. The form of the request is very important; one which implies that it is normal to donate, that there will be no objection, will secure more positive responses than one which is neutral or assumes the opposite. Other societies close to ours have extended the concept even further, to mandatory availability of organs suitable for transplantation, without request; my own ethical belief accords with this attitude, but I doubt whether it would be possible to force this upon contemporary British or Canadian society. I do think that society's readiness to accept such ideas is consistently underestimated, but this is a type of nettle which no democratically elected Government is keen to grasp; vocal minorities carry more political weight than do inarticulate majorities. Certainly a defined, consistent and funded policy of education would move society rapidly towards such

acceptance, particularly when the simple matter is emphasised, that the procedures necessary for organ donation neither disfigure a body for contemporary funeral rites, nor significantly delay its release for them.

To a scientist it is attractive to postulate 'rights' of the biomass, but most of man's thinking has set him apart from and above the rest of creation and we are still arguing about the rights of the higher mammalia. Man does and will manipulate the biomass to his own ends and is learning very slowly that such manipulations frequently result in consequences which are unforeseen in nature and extent, and often deleterious; this applies to organ transplantation. In considering the human body during life, and the cadaver after death, we should take into account the totality of which it is a part. One reason for doing this is that other human beings are also part of this totality, and what we do, as at Chernobyl, may affect them. Whatever ethical value we place upon the non-human constituents of the biomass we cannot ignore them because we are part of the totality, and biologically we are indeed all members one of another.

H E Emson MA MD FRC P(C) is Professor and Head, Department of Pathology, College of Medicine, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada S7N 0X0.

News and notes

Medical decision-making conference

The second conference of the European Society for Medical Decision-making will be held in Copenhagen from 1st-4th June 1988. For further information contact Jorgen Hilden or Annelise Nielsen, University of Copenhagen, Panum Institute, Blegdamsvej 3, DK-2200 Copenhagen N, Denmark.

Papers (both theoretical and applied) are invited on any aspect(s) of medical decision-making such as clinical decision-making *per se*; clinical research and decision-making; regional variations in medical

practice; quality of life and utility assessment; resource allocation and medical decision-making; clinical behaviour; ethics and choice in medicine; decision aspects of clinical research methodology; computational and graphical tools; health policy and medical decision-making; and other relevant topics in medical decision-making.

Those wishing to offer a paper should contact Jorgen Hilden or Annelise Nielsen, preferably with an indication of topic.

has about the scope of his subject, his object is to get clear about the issues in question and to help those who are willing to listen to make as reasonable and responsible decisions as possible in their practice. It is proper nevertheless for the professionals to demand that such reflection be not conducted in a vacuum. In the University of Wales scheme care is taken at all stages to guarantee that professional input informs the philosophical discussion lest the scheme be accused of

being concerned with problems of fantasy and science fiction rather than with the realities with which those involved with health care have to struggle.

Donald Evans JP BA PhD is Director of the Centre for the Study of Philosophy and Health Care at University College, Swansea. He is also Associate Director of the Institute of Medical Ethics.

News and notes

Philosophical ethics in reproductive medicine

A conference on philosophical ethics in reproductive medicine will be held at Leeds University from April 18-22, 1988.

Speakers have been invited from the United States of America, Britain and Europe and there will be free communication sessions and poster displays representing the work of many experts in the field.

Those wishing to submit abstracts should contact the Conference Organiser, Mrs C P Shirley, Department of Adult and Continuing Education, The University, Leeds, LS2 9JT, UK for the appropriate form.

All abstracts should be submitted by 1 December, 1987.

and law courses is essential to ensure candidates do not fall into a void between the various funding councils.

Lobjoit is a Student Health Physician. All are Directors of the Centre for Social Ethics and Policy at Manchester University.

Margaret Brazier is Senior Lecturer in Law; Anthony Dyson is Samuel Ferguson Professor of Social and Pastoral Theology; John Harris is Senior Lecturer in Philosophy in the Department of Education, and Mary

References

- (1) Boyd K M, ed. *Report of a working party on the teaching of medical ethics* – Chairman Sir Desmond Pond (*The Pond report*). London: IME Publications, 1987.

News and notes

Medical Humanities Review

Medical Humanities Review has been created to provide timely and incisive reviews of significant new works in the field. Although book reviews are regularly published in many journals in the cognate disciplines of the medical humanities, no journal has previously attempted to pull them all together and focus its attention solely on reviews of new works rather than scholarly articles.

Medical Humanities Review also publishes essay reviews that will help analyse and define the medical humanities review essays.

The editors of *Medical Humanities Review* are

Ronald Carson and Thomas Murray. They, along with Chester Burns, Susan Cayleff, Thomas Cole, Sally Gadow, Anne Hudson Jones, Harold Vanderpool, and William Winslade, make up the editorial board.

For more information about this twice-yearly publication (subscription US\$20.00 individuals, US\$40.00 institutions) write to: *Medical Humanities Review*, Institute for the Medical Humanities, The University of Texas Medical Branch, Galveston, Texas 77550-2764, USA.

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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
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by direct application to the appropriate
co-ordinating secretary named above.
A stamped addressed A4 envelope
would be appreciated.

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Institute of Medical Ethics

The Institute of Medical Ethics is a centre for research, education and information. It is financed by grants from charitable bodies, government sources and members' subscriptions.

It was established as the Society for the Study of Medical Ethics, and is an independent, non-partisan organisation for the multi-disciplinary 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.

Two reports, *The Ethics of Resource Allocation in Health Care* by Kenneth Boyd and *Dilemmas of Dying* by Ian Thompson, were published, by the Edinburgh University Press, a few years ago.

Last year two more reports were published. One, on the ethics of clinical research investigations on children, *Medical Research with Children: Ethics, Law and Practice* by Richard Nicholson was published by the Oxford University Press and *Life Before Birth – the Search for a Consensus on Abortion and the Treatment of Infertility* by Kenneth Boyd, Brendan Callaghan and Edward Shotter, was published by SPCK. The *Pond Report on Teaching Medical Ethics*, a summary of which has appeared in the IME Bulletin, has been published in full this year.

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 IME. The quarterly *Journal of Medical Ethics* is available by separate subscription.

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