

Broadening the debate: the future of JME feature articles

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The JME editorial team selects its feature articles from the best papers accepted for publication based on their quality, novelty and capacity to move debate forward on a specific issue. Feature articles are made freely available and are published alongside reviewed and submitted commentaries. We do this partly to promote and acknowledge excellent work in medical ethics, but also to encourage authors to submit their best papers to the JME.

JME feature articles have deepened the analysis of some central issues for medical ethics. ‘Common morality’ is one way of underpinning general ethical principles and it is a concept that is central to the justification that Beauchamp and Childress give in their classic articulation of the four principles.¹ Rhodes’ critical discussion of common morality in her feature article² has been well cited since then, which is a good thing from the perspective of the author and the journal, but more significantly it stimulated debate about some central features of the most influential normative approach to bioethics. The paper was published alongside robust responses from those in favour of the common morality view^{3–5} and a rejoinder from Rhodes.⁶

One of the JME’s objectives is to be a forum for the reasoned analysis of ethical issues in healthcare and feature articles play an important role in furthering this key aim. One of the reasons why ethical analysis is important is because it is way of scrutinising ethical assumptions, especially when they are grounded on gut reactions rather than rationality and

evidence. JME feature articles play an important in presenting the reasoned analysis of an issue about which there might be preconceived views, along with the a range of perspectives: a good example of this is Jecker’s feature article *Nothing to be ashamed of: sex robots for older adults with disabilities*.⁷

In order to maximise the impact and depth of analysis of feature articles, it is important that the journal’s commentaries are written from a range of perspectives. Up until now, commentaries have been commissioned by the editors and while that has worked well, it was a system that relied on our ability to identify a range of perspectives, geographical spread, expertise and seniority. Creating the possibility for authors to submit a proposal to write a commentary broadens ethical debate and increases the range of voices that are heard.

For these reasons we developed a system whereby authors can be alerted to new feature articles and invited to submit a commentary proposal. We have now instituted a website where you can be alerted to a new feature article (<https://jme-uk.org/about-us/partners/feature-articles-panel/>) and there are also details about how to do this on the JME website (<https://jme.bmj.com/pages/jme-commentaries>). Once signed up, an email will be sent when a new feature article is accepted and you will be invited to submit a short proposal, via the JME Scholar One manuscript submission site.

One of the aims of instituting this process for commentary proposals is to widen the pool of commentators. We are keen to receive proposals from early career researchers, researchers from the Global South and different home disciplines. By broadening the range of people contributing to the JME, we hope to engage with the global medical ethics community

more comprehensively. This will help give a greater range of views and opinions to develop thinking, practice and policy on key issues.

The feature article in this issue, by Ferrario *et al* on algorithmic prediction,⁸ is the first to have submitted commentaries, and we received a number of high quality proposals. We hope this inspires you to submit proposals for commentaries on upcoming feature articles.

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