Contributors

Feature Articles

Antommaria, Armand Matheny.

"Who Should Survive?: One of the Choices on Our Conscience": Mental Retardation and the History of Contemporary Bioethics

Subjects:
- Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation. Who should survive?: one of the choices on our conscience [film]
- Down syndrome -- United States -- History -- 20th century.
- Medical ethics -- United States -- History -- 20th century.

Abstract:

The film "Who Should Survive?: One of the Choices on Our Conscience" contains a dramatization of the death of an infant with Down syndrome as the result of the parents' decision not to have a congenital intestinal obstruction surgically corrected. The dramatization was based on two similar cases at The Johns Hopkins Hospital and was financed by the Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr., Foundation. When "Who Should Survive?" was exhibited in 1971, the public reaction was generally critical of the parents' decision and the physicians' inaction. Although technological developments in medicine were a necessary condition for the production of this film and its unanticipated reception, they were not a sufficient condition. The proximate cause was a changed understanding of the capabilities of individuals with Down syndrome. Part of the impetus for this change was data showing the adverse effects of institutionalization on normal children.

Wicclair, Mark R.

Pharmacies, Pharmacists, and Conscientious Objection

Subjects:
- Pharmacists -- Professional ethics -- United States.
- Pharmaceutical services -- Moral and ethical aspects -- United States.
- Pharmaceutical ethics -- United States.
Abstract:

This paper examines the obligations of pharmacy licensees and pharmacists in the context of conscience-based objections to filling lawful prescriptions for certain types of medications—e.g., standard and emergency contraceptives. Claims of conscience are analyzed as means to preserve or maintain an individual’s moral integrity. It is argued that pharmacy licensees have an obligation to dispense prescription medications that satisfy the health needs of the populations they serve, and this obligation can override claims of conscience. Although efforts should be made to respect the moral integrity of pharmacists and accommodate their claims of conscience, it is argued that the health needs of patients and the professional obligations of pharmacists limit the extent to which pharmacists may refuse to assist patients who have lawful prescriptions for medically indicated drugs.

Fisher, Jill A.

Procedural Misconceptions and Informed Consent: Insights from Empirical Research on the Clinical Trials Industry

Subjects:
- Informed consent (Medical law)
- Human experimentation in medicine -- Social aspects -- United States.

Abstract:

This paper provides a simultaneously reflexive and analytical framework to think about obstacles to truly informed consent in social science and biomedical research. To do so, it argues that informed consent often goes awry due to *procedural misconceptions* built into the research context. The concept of procedural misconception is introduced to describe how individuals respond to what is familiar in research settings and overlook what is different. In the context of biomedical research, procedural misconceptions can be seen to function as root causes of therapeutic misconceptions.

Bagheri, Alireza.

Compensated Kidney Donation: An Ethical Review of the Iranian Model

Subjects:
- Donation of organs, tissues, etc. -- Moral and ethical aspects -- Iran.
- Donation of organs, tissues, etc. -- Government policy -- Iran.

Abstract:

Iran has had a program of compensated kidney donation from living unrelated (LUR) donors since 1997. The aim of the program was to address the increasing demand for kidney transplantation in a morally sound manner. The program was successful in terms of increasing the number of kidneys available for transplantation. This paper presents a critical review of the program and its ethical status. Denying organ donors legitimate compensation because of the understandable fear of an organ trade is not morally justifiable, and the Iranian model of compensated LUR kidney donation offers substantial benefits that overcome these concerns. Despite its benefits, the program lacks secure measures to prevent the risk of a direct monetary relationship between donors and recipients, and it must be revised in order to be morally justifiable.

Olsen, J. Mark.

Depression, SSRIs, and the Supposed Obligation to Suffer Mentally

Subjects:
- Antidepressants -- Moral and ethical aspects.
- Depression, Mental -- Moral and ethical aspects.
- Character.

Abstract:

Within both popular and academic literature, concerns have been expressed about the implications of antidepressant use on character development. In this paper, I identify specific versions of these worries and argue that they are misguided. I begin by arguing that the obligation to suffer if it will bring about a noble character is imagined. Legitimate concerns about character enhancement remain, but they do not count against most antidepressant use. Thus there is no moral prohibition against antidepressant use. Furthermore, some of the calls for caution about antidepressant
use, such as those expressed by the President's Council on Bioethics, are overstated.