

IAB News

The Newsletter of the International Association of Bioethics

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The International Association of Bioethics Newsletter is produced by Mike Parker and Deborah Diniz. If you would like to contribute to the next issue or if you have events that you would like to have announced in the next issue, please contact Mike Parker on Michael.parker@ethox.ox.ac.uk

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DEEP LISTENING

Reflections on the World Congress of Bioethics, Sydney

Tuesday 9th - Friday 12th November 2004

The 7th World Congress of Bioethics--held in Sydney at the University of New South Wales--was a great success. A good sense of the Congress can be gained from the Video Highlights and Reports of the Congress.

The Congress was planned to take a broad approach to bioethics. The theme was Deep Listening: bridging divides in local and global ethics. The idea was suggested by a word from an Australian Aboriginal language--*dadirri*--which means inner deep listening and quiet still awareness. The sub-themes covered public health ethics, ethics of Indigenous health, and refiguring the body, as well as a general theme that allowing for a range of bioethics topics including ethical issues in biotechnology and clinical ethics (see link to Theme and Subthemes). The Congress included internationally and nationally renowned keynote and plenary speakers, events for the public (an Open Forum on biotechnology, stem cells and cloning and a Public Lecture on human rights and bioethics). There were 15 special symposia presented by specialist groups covering a wide range of topics, 213 individual paper presentations, poster presentations, and a program of Indigenous dance and music, storytelling, poetry and art, as well as a welcome party and a great finalé party to finish. There was the opportunity for conversation: in presenting papers (authors could offer conversation presentations), in small groups in one of the major plenaries, and outside the formal program.

The World Congress of Bioethics was preceded by the 5th Feminists Approaches to Bioethics (FAB) Congress (which ran over three days); and was followed by the Australasian Bioethics Association Conference in combination with the Australian Institute of Health Law and Ethics (ABA/AIHLE) for a further two days. There were 550 people registered for the World Congress of Bioethics, 120 for the FAB Congress and a further 120 for the ABA/AIHLE conference. The

whole event was the biggest thing to happen in Bioethics in Australia and the Asian Pacific region.

Participants enjoyed the relaxed setting the University of New South Wales, and many took advantage of the proximity of the University to the beach, good restaurants and the city.

After more than two years in preparation, it was very satisfying that the Congress was such a success and was enjoyed by so many. I am very grateful to the many people who contributed and have named particular people in the Congress Program (p.5 of the Program Book--see attached link). I am also very grateful to all who came to the Congress as participants and presenters and to the team of volunteers who supported the Congress as group facilitators, and guides.

The 8th World Congress of Bioethics is to be held in Beijing in 2006. I wish the Beijing team every success in preparing for this Event and look forward to seeing many of you there.

Paul McNeill

President of the 7th World Congress of Bioethics
A Director of the International Association of Bioethics
Associate Professor of Ethics and Law in Medicine
University of New South Wales



Reflections on the Congress

Angela Amondi Wasunna

In the last four days, I have been informed, I have been inspired, I have been humbled, and I have been challenged. I have learnt many important lessons from the thoughtful presentations, and conversations during session breaks. One lesson, however, stands out for me: The growing bioethical interest in global inequality, poverty and justice.

Speaker after speaker at the conference challenged us to examine at the big picture, that is, the context within which global disparities thrive. We were urged to challenge long held assumptions about how the world works, and to begin to examine the existing global world order afresh.

For a long time, the field of bioethics has been accused by skeptics of ignoring the most important health issues facing the world today, particularly those affecting the developing world. Bioethicists have also been charged with debating amongst themselves in an elitist manner, distant from the health realities faced by every day people. It would have done such skeptics well to attend this conference.

I counted over 20 sessions devoted to issues surrounding world poverty, global power relations, unfair trade practices or the unjust economic order, human rights, justice and equity. These issues were not merely “discussed”--practical, concrete, and sometimes radical proposals were put forward in an attempt to move the rhetoric into action.

Thomas Pogge, for example, made the ambitious, but sensible proposition that pharmaceutical inventors should be rewarded in proportion to the impact of their inventions on the global disease burden. Solomon Benatar urged us to view HIV/AIDS, not in isolation, but as symptom of the larger problems ailing much of the developing world; namely poverty and injustice. George Annas made the case (persuasively), for the field of bioethics to be situated within a human rights framework, under the guidance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Daniel Brock and Daniel Wikler urged us to pay attention to the ethics of population health focused on “health” and not just on health care. They also encouraged us to include quantitative studies in our basic bioethics training to better equip us to deal with the bioethical challenges of the future.

We also heard about the challenges faced by indigenous populations in the delivery of health care in Australia. Many of the problems articulated were similar to those found among other indigenous populations of the world. These and other presentations on issues of globalization, poverty and human rights, led me to these general conclusions:

- ◆ That international bioethicists are finally asking the right questions

- ◆ That international bioethicists are addressing “big picture” global health problems in a pragmatic way, grounded in ethical principles
- ◆ That international bioethicists are concerned and informed global citizens

I am encouraged that bioethics as a discipline is as relevant today for a human rights practitioner in Nigeria as it is for a bioethics professor in Canada. That even though there may be controversies about the beginnings, or birth of bioethics as a discipline, there can be no dispute about the positive contributions it has made globally. The diversity of participants at this congress only confirms this point.

The deliberations at this conference have strongly validated and confirmed my own conviction-- that bioethics is a progressive and inclusive discipline, solid in principle but also pragmatic in its approach to some of the most vexing health problems facing the world today. We have come a long way as a profession, but there is much road ahead.

Ruth Macklin

This account of my reflections on aspects of the Congress is in three parts. Part one is a brief summary of what I saw and heard. The second part identifies some tensions--perceived or real. Part three contains my personal reaction to several sessions that I attended.

1. What I saw and heard

I noted a welcome focus on one of the main themes of the Congress: population health and public health. The focus on topics related to these themes was much greater than at any of the previous six IAB World Congresses. A second focus was also welcome--that of multinational and transnational issues, including multinational research and globalization. The Congress afforded participants the opportunity to see young scholars addressing these topics, as well as the time-honored experience of hearing the “titans” in the field discuss the Congress themes. The program included a significant number of sessions on current “hot topics” cloning and stem cell research--which together accounted for one open forum, two

symposia, and three concurrent sessions. Finally, I was thankful not to hear something that was all too frequent at past World Congresses: yet another bashing of principlism!

II. Some tensions--perceived or real

a) The relatively new focus on population health, in contrast to the more traditional attention to ethics in the clinical setting, was notable. This gave rise to a worry expressed by at least one participant that clinical ethics will be abandoned in the future, replaced by the newer focus on public and population health. There is little danger of that, and speakers hastened to reassure any skeptics that clinical ethics is alive and well in bioethics and is destined to remain so.

b) The Congress included a reprisal of the long-standing tension between the primacy in bioethics of autonomy, in which the individual is pre-eminent, and a communitarian approach that emphasizes solidarity and communal or public goods. Although it is true that this tension exists, it is often overstated and overblown. Various Congress speakers took sides on this tension, but in a way that brought enlightenment to the discussion.

c) A possible tension arose between a human rights approach and the traditional approaches to topics in bioethics: are these essentially the same or are they different approaches, raising different issues? Is human rights an aspect or sub-theme of bioethics? Can bioethics be properly understood and addressed entirely in the language and concepts of bioethics, or does it need to be supplemented by a human rights perspective? My own answer to this question is that they are two separate approaches but with an overlap between them. The two approaches can and should be mutually reinforcing.

III. Personal reactions

At this Congress, I encountered more agreement with my own moral values, political commitments, and concerns about social and global justice than I typically find among my fellow citizens in the United States of America. In one session, a speaker expressed extreme hostility toward the U.S. for its role in keeping drug prices high, supporting big Phrma, and controlling world trade arrangements. That

extreme hostility is well deserved. In another session, speakers defended a single ethical standard for research, whether a study is conducted in an industrialized country or a developing country. This is a position I strongly endorse and have advocated in my own writings. In many sessions I attended--plenaries, symposia, and concurrent sessions--speakers and participants defended obligations toward the poor and called for implementation of programs to achieve greater social and global justice.

As a result, for me this Congress has been a reaffirmation of ethical principles and perspectives that exist throughout the world but are largely absent among the majority of people in my own country. Bioethicists may, of course, be a special group. But it has been a distinct pleasure being among such colleagues here in Sydney at the 7th World Congress of the IAB.

Paul A. Komesaroff

When I was asked to contribute to this session the brief was to present a reflection on a special or representative moment that occurred in the course of the Congress. In general, I have to say, I resist panels that sum up meetings. I do not think that they ever succeed: if you try to summarise a presentation you cannot do it as well as the original. It does not work for the audience: if they were there they heard it once and do not need to hear it again. If they were not, they probably will not benefit from a brief sketch of what they missed.

Nonetheless, I have spent the last three and a half days looking for that moment. It is like the quest in the "Teachings of Don Juan" for the moment of ineffable perfection, of perfect repose. In the end I realised--like Carlos Casteneda--that the place itself could not be defined in terms of abstract criteria but only in relation to the experience--my experience--of the Congress itself.

I was one of the organisers of this meeting, so I have a slightly different perspective from many of you. I think that it is useful to point out--to those who have not been through it--what a complex and demanding process shaping a conference program can be. It is not just a matter of calling for papers and organising them into a schedule. The

program expresses a conception, a vision, of an integrated experience. It is an opportunity to showcase ideas. If you get it right, you can sometimes even generate new ones. Then it is a matter of finding speakers, shaping symposia, negotiating and compromising around individual papers, of smoothing ruffled egos etc. It takes well over a year--in our case nearly two years of at times frenetic work.

I do not want in any way to give the impression that I did the work. On the contrary, I played a relatively minor role in the scheme of things. Paul McNeill carried the overwhelming burden, along with his tireless helper Kimberley Hatchett. There are always tepid thank yous at the end of a meeting, but few people really appreciate the pain and energy, anxiety, commitment and intensity that go into an enterprise like this.

When we started organising the meeting we chose three themes that we thought both reflected novel tendencies and raised questions for the future. The first was the theme of the FAB overlap day, "reconfiguring the body"; the second was that of indigenous health; and the third was public health ethics.

No matter how carefully a meeting is constructed, every participant follows his or her own special journey through it. In fact, I have calculated exactly how many such pathways there were in this one: if you were to choose one of each of the concurrent sessions in the Congress, with 5 symposia and 11 or 12 free communications to choose from, the total number of possible choices available to you was 313,632,000. If you are one of those who is prepared to make choices about individual papers within sessions the number of choices you had available to you was 22,863,772,800.

Of course, there is a deeper sense in which everyone makes the experience of a conference his or her own. One follows up personal and professional interests, one chooses topics in which has an abiding interest, or in which one has never heard anything before. One meets old friends--and maybe goes out to dinner with them and gets drunk--or meets new people who may or may not become friends. One talks, argues, gets angry and passionate, complains about how

bad--or, somewhat more rarely--praises how good, a talk was. It can be a sad, poignant, frustrating and a sometimes satisfying experience.

I do not want to sound sentimental, but it is our tendency to regard academic engagements as sterile, detached, intellectual experiences. But that is hardly ever the case with the lived experience of an event that deals with things that we hold to be important--just as it is hardly ever the case that a patient in a clinical relationship faced with a difficult decision will deliver a cool, calculated, rational and fully autonomous judgement.

I personally heard some good, and some not so good talks. I will not mention individual talks, for the reasons I have already given. But I heard some good talks about postmodernism and the body, a finely argued talk on Habermas' objections to genetic manipulation, and a talk about "transfiguring relationships" between HIV positive lovers. I saw a presentation by some wonderful, courageous people who are working with--and fighting for--refugees in camps in Kenya and Thailand. Today I went to a moving and disturbing session about the experiences of asylum seekers in Australia. There were talks I went to where I could have done better and talks where I felt I glimpsed new insights.

The crux of the experience however, and the one on which I personally had most pinned my hopes, was the indigenous day--wednesday. In a sense, for me--for us on the Organising Committee, I think--it epitomised what we meant to convey by the Congress as a whole. After all, we did choose the theme of the day--that of "deep listening" as the theme for the entire meeting. We took a risk: there were novel aspects. We really did not know how it would work out.

It took a year and a half to organise, but Denis McDermott, Lisa Jackson Pulver, Paul and the others did an amazing job. The day included the welcome by Aunty Ali and the response from Julian Noel, the keynote address by Marcia Langton and the "deep listening" session in which we were supposed to share something of ourselves with another member of the group at

our table.

Marcia's talk raised--in a not completely unproblematic way--some fundamental questions about knowledge and its dependence on culture, power and the economic forms of relationship. The "deep listening" experience could have been facile, superficial, even offensive, and maybe it was for some people. I am not basically a sentimental person and I tend to resent what I regard as attempts at manipulation. I was open, but sceptical. For me, however, this became a profound moment. I talked briefly with a young Maori woman from Christchurch who told me with exquisite eloquence about where she had come from, her sense of place, her deep connection with her people and her indebtedness to her parents. I was very moved. This was for me the most moving--and enduring--moment of the whole meeting.

Later in the day, the concluding plenary sought to raise questions more systematically about indigenous cultures and their distinctive characteristics. I enjoyed that--and especially Louis Peachey's reflection on the concept of the Aboriginal invention of the chariot. However, the real richness undoubtedly came in the events outside, on the lawns and in the tent during the breaks.

Taken together, the events of the day did, I think, achieve what we had hoped, and maybe even somewhat more. They gestured, no doubt merely in a tentative and inchoate way, towards some new paths for bioethics. They suggested that ethical discourse is not just about PowerPoint slides and dot points. It is not a search for absolute truths, or normative rules of action, or even a discipline with a method and a defined place in relation to the institutions of power.

They showed that ethics refers to a broad, heterogeneous, dynamic set of dialogues about values, values that are contested and embedded in culture. It showed that ethical discourse is about living and breathing human beings, about people who have a history, who have stories to tell, often painful--sometimes unbearably painful--stories. It is about people with music,

poetry, dancing, different cuisines and medical cultures. It showed that talking with them can be difficult, and not always successful. They can be closed and uncommunicative, or as in this case, despite all the abominations of their history, they can remain open and magnanimous.

Perhaps I am over-interpreting and was merely looking for things I wanted to find. But I think that the message of the day for me was that ethical discourse is a process of dialogue that has some universal features, but is nonetheless rooted in communities, in time and in space. Real communities that may still bear the marks of colonization, of poverty, of oppression--not just in our demographic representations or the figures we accumulate about income levels or rates of disease, as revealing as these may be--but in their complex and sometimes contradictory fullness and creativity.

I think that the promise of the day was that it is possible to bridge the divides, to establish critical, sometimes stuttering and inconclusive, dialogues across the boundaries of culture, race, religion, politics. The challenge is to move ethical theory and practice away from a self-satisfied and self-fulfilling search for their own identity and social role, and to open up new questions and new sites of contestation and reflection.

I have presented one account of an experience of the Congress. I am sure that all participants had a different journey. This was mine. □

An interview with the President of the 8th World Congress Qiu Renzong

DD: Firstly, could you bring us up to day with how plans for the IAB congress in Beijing are progressing? How is going the organisation?

QR: First, I would like to take this occasion to send my best wishes to all members of IAB and all readers of the Newsletter and warmly welcome all of you to participate in the 8th World Congress of Bioethics in Beijing in 2006. Since backing from Sydney, we established the Congress Committee

which will play the role of both Scientific and Organising Committee, and have leading bioethicists all over China, including those from Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan, as its members. We also established International Advisory Committee which have world famous and esteemed bioethicists as its members. These two Committees together with the IAB Board of Directors will guide all preparatory work of the Congress. During this time of period we have widely contacted international organization, domestic institutions, and colleagues from inside and outside of China to consult and discuss how to organize the plenary sessions, panel discussions, satellite meetings, special symposia and etc. And the Call for Papers will be sent to all colleagues and all institutions in the world and put on the website soon.

world and focused on the topics including ethical issues in public health, medicine and market, protecting human subjects, genomics and ethics and the cultural dimensions of bioethics.

With the hope that the Congress would stimulate further debate and closer communications among Asian colleagues and between them and colleagues in other part of the world, bioethicists and all scholars involved in this region would meet bioethical challenges facing their countries, have deep insights in solving the emerging ethical issues, and have these solution institutionalized into guidelines or regulations/laws in collaboration with policy-makers and law-makers.

DD: What do you hoping for out of this congress in Asia? What kind of event will it be and what effect will it have on bioethics in Asia?

DD: How is going bioethics in China currently? What are the main topics discussed?

QR: Asia is one of the most prosperous regions in the world where the economy has been increasing persistently with a miraculous speed, but not all people share the benefits from economic growth and medical progress. Instead, the unjust gap between well-off and worse-off is getting wider. Epidemic and outbreak of HIV, SARS and avian flu threaten individual and public health like a Damocles' sword. Rural and indigenous people get relatively few access to health care. Market becomes a more and more pervasive and formidable power in medicine and research. Asia is becoming a biggest market in the world for pharmaceutical companies with inflating health needs, and is rich with genetic resources and biodiversity, protecting human subjects is a urgent need. And most Asian countries have their unique cultural tradition for thousand of years. In view of these specific situation we hope that the Congress would be centered on the theme to create a healthier and just

QR: Bioethics in China now is quite prosperous. It has already gone beyond the academic circle and is being institutionalized. Since the publicity of the sheep Dolly bioethics began to be a focus not only from academics but also from the government and legislature, from the public and mass media. Bioethicist is no longer an inhabitants in a ivory tower, but an activist who has to contact the public, work with scientists or physicians, review protocols, train investigators and administrators, give counseling to decision-makers or participate in drafting of regulation etc.

The main topics that are discussed recently include ethical issues in human genetics and genomics, protecting human subjects in biomedical and health research, ethical issues in HIV and SARS, ethical and regulatory issues in assisted reproductive technologies, ethical and legal issues in brain death and in organ transplantation, just allocation of health resources, ethical issues in health care reform and health policy, Chinese cultural and bioethics etc.

DD: Could you tell us about publications, courses, Graduate programs on bioethics

in China? We would like to know more about the Chinese bioethics as whole.

QR: There are two journals that are exclusively devoted to publish articles on medical/bioethical issues, that is Medical and Philosophy and Chinese Medical Ethics, in academic journals such as Studies in Dialectics of Nature, Journal of Dialectics of Nature, Philosophical Research, and Trends in Philosophy there are bioethical articles published.

In the majority of medical schools medical ethics is required course, in some universities bioethics is an elective course. There are programs for Master studies at many medical schools, and programs for Ph.D. studies at the Graduate School of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and at the School of the Humanities, Huazhong University of Science and Technology.

The Chinese Society for Medical Ethics affiliated with Chinese Medical Association was founded in October, 1988. Recently Center for Bioethics has been set up in universities or medical schools such as in Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences/Peking Union Medical College (PUMC), Huazhong University of Science and Technology(HUST)/Tongji School of Medicine, and Wuhan University.

The first book on bioethics Bioethics was published in 1987 (Qiu Renzong, Shanghai People's Press), some published in 2003, such as An Introduction to Bioethics (Qiu Renzong and Zhai Xiaomei, PUMC Press), Biomedical Research Ethics (Chen Yuanfang and Qiu Renzong, PUMC Press), Bioethics (Shen Mingxian, High Education Press).

In 2004/2005 efforts have been made on the capacity building, Among the others training workshops on research ethics were/will be organized by Health Science Center, Peking University under the sponsorship of China Medical Board in Hanzhou, Chengdu and Xian, and organized by PUMC, HUST and Harvard School of Public Health under the

sponsorship of NIH in Shanghai, Beijing and Wuhan. Many other training workshops has been organized by PUMC in collaboration with Anhui Medical University or Chinese Center for Disease of Control in many cities. Last but not the least is that the Beijing International Conference on Bioethics has been held in January 2004.

More details please see Zhai Xiaomei: Country Report in Eubio Journal 2004.

DD: Could you tell us about the origins of and development of bioethics in Asia?

QR: As for as China concerned, although the morality of traditional medicine has long history of thousands years, the bioethics began in modern China with a series of events during 1970s-1980s. In December 1979 a Conference on Philosophy of Medicine was held in Guangzhou at which a major report was focused on ethical issues raised by advanced biomedical technologies. In 1980 the journal Medicine and Philosophy was started to be published.. In 1986 under the sponsorship of the Minister of Education there was a workshop on bioethics for training young teaching staff in medical schools in Nanjing City, many of them later became the backbone of bioethics in China. In 1987 the book Bioethics (Qiu Renzong, Shanghai People's Press) was published. Among the most important events there were two conferences held in 1988: the first National Conference on ELSI Issues in Euthanasia in Shanghai, and the National Conference on ELSI Issues in Human Reproduction in Yueyang City, Hunan Province, the latter was ended with a policy recommendation on artificial insemination and sperm banks to the Ministry of Health and the State Commission on Family Planning. In 1986 and 1987 there were two legal cases respectively on euthanasia and artificial insemination by donor that were publicized in mass media and caused the debate in professionals and the public. Since then almost each year there has been a national conference on bioethics in

addition to a number of local conferences. These conferences covered almost all topics in bioethics. Academic exchanges between mainland, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Macao were getting more and more frequent. There were also held Sino-Japan, Sino-US, Sino-German Conferences and Conference on Bioethics in East Asia (1995). Feminist approaches to bioethics were also promoted (see the books *Reproductive Health and Ethics*, 1996, PUMC & BMU Joint Press, *Chinese Women and Feminist Thought*, 1998, and *Feminist Philosophy and Public Policy*, 2004, Chinese Social Science Press).

After the publicity of the sheep Dolly bioethics began to be institutionalized in mainland. The regulations or laws which have been promulgated since 1998 include Ministry of Health (MOH): Interim Guidance on Ethical Review of Biomedical Research Involving Human Subject (draft, 1998), State Food and Drug Administration (SFDA): Regulations on Drug Clinical Trial (2000), MOH: Regulations on Human Assisted Reproductive Technologies (2001), Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST) & MOH: Ethical Guiding Principles on Human Embryonic Stem Cell Research (2004) In drafting these guidelines or regulations bioethicists and other professionals have been involved. According to the regulations above IRBs have been set up since 1999.

bioethicists from all over the world). I agree with Paul Feyerabend on that the proliferation of theories or perspectives is a factor of scientific progress, It is why I edited and published the book titled *Bioethics: Asian Perspectives A Quest for Moral Diversity* which was published by Kluwer academic publishers in 2004. Recently I also edited a book with Professor Ruth Chadwick titled *Bioethics: Feminist Perspectives* which will be published in 2005.

But at the same time I don't think ethical relativism can stand up too. Different perspectives are deeply rooted in their own philosophies and culture, however they may share same fundamental values, as Confucius said "Human nature is similar". For example, the basic principles of non-maleficence, beneficence and respect for person can be found in the Confucian classical books, such as "Do no harm, it is the art of ren"(Mencius), "The person with ren must respect person" (Xun Zi). How can you say the principle of non-maleficence or beneficence is exclusively originated from the West?.

DD: Some Latin American bioethicists argue that we should develop Latin American perspectives to bioethics. Do you think we need Chinese or Asian perspectives to bioethics too?

QR: I completely understand the efforts Latin American colleagues are making to develop Latin American perspectives to bioethics. From the beginning I am skeptical to the wording "Universal Ethics" or "Global Bioethics" (if it means an overarching bioethical theory, but not means that bioethics now becomes a global endeavor which is participated in by

DD: What are the main particularities of Chinese bioethics?

QR: It is difficult to articulate it in this brief answer. For me one of the main particularities is the concept of personhood. For Chinese the concept of person is a relational one: Person is not so independent as some Western scholars argued and is not just a bearer of the right, person is in relation or in a personal network in which persons are interdependent and mutual supportive. This relational concept of personhood entails other particularities, such as in addressing bioethical issues the balance between individual interest and family/societal interest and the balance between rights and responsibilities have to be weighed, and the specific context has to be considered. These particularities may provide some insights

in dealing with ethical issues facing us today, whereas they have their own pitfalls that we should not be ignored.

DD: Finally, how did you personally come to be interested in bioethics and what are your main areas of interest?

QR: My background is history and philosophy. When I was made a teacher at the Peking Union Medical College, my medical students (now almost all of them are professors, and some are academicians) frankly told me philosophy is useless. I am not a person who is content with staying in the ivory tower, then I turned to philosophy of science and medicine. However, working at a medical school you have to be faced with issues involving living human beings, not just atoms or molecules. Then eventually my main focus was turned to bioethics. Even I moved to the Institute of Philosophy, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences I was still interested in ethical issues in life sciences and health care. At the beginning I have done some work in euthanasia and reproductive technologies, since 1993 I have been involved in AIDS issues and other ethical issues in reproductive health. Since 1996 I began to be involved in the ethical issues in genetics and later genomics. Recently one of my focus is research ethics and in collaboration with my colleagues, especially with Dr. Zhai Xiaomei, I am making efforts to do some work in capacity building: we organize a lot of training workshops, review protocols in many ethical review committees and provide policy recommendations to the government etc. □

About the International Association of Bioethics' Networks

Maria Patrão Neves

The Networks are very important for the International Association of Bioethics that, according to its Constitution, pursues its educational and scientific objectives through different paths which include the activity of International Networks focusing on a variety of

specific topics in bioethics

The IAB is currently updating its Networks, under the coordination of one the members of the Board of Directors, Maria Patrão Neves (patrao@notes.uac.pt). For two months all the networks were repeatedly contacted by e.mail and regular mail to the available addresses. The results were the following:

Active IAB Networks

The IAB is happy to inform that, at present, there are six Active Networks:

1. BIOETHICS EDUCATION NETWORK

Coordinator(s)/contact(s):

George J. Agich, Ph.D.
The Cleveland Clinic Foundation
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Membership:

No formal membership requirements beyond an interest in promoting bioethics education. The Bioethics Education Network sponsored a special symposium on ethics consultation at IAB 7 which drew an audience over 100.

Goals:

Promote bioethics education outside colleges and universities
Support education of ethics committees
Promote the public and interdisciplinary discussion of bioethics

Projects:

The Bioethics Education Network organized a special symposium on clinical ethics consultation at the IAB World Congress of Bioethics in Sydney and is a sponsor of the series of biennial international conferences on ethics consultation. Ethics Consultation: the First International Assessment Summit was held in Cleveland, OH on April 4-6, 2003; the Second International Conference on Ethics Consultation is scheduled for Basel, Switzerland on March 17-20, 2005; the Third Conference

will be held in Toronto in May 2007.

2. ENVIRONMENTAL BIOETHICS NETWORK

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Departmental URL: <http://www.unmc.edu/psm>
"Green Health Center" Project URL:
<http://www.unmc.edu/green>
City Sprouts URL: <http://www.unmc.edu/sprouts>

Peter Whitehouse, M.D.-Ph.D., Co-Coordinator
Director Integrative Studies,
Department of Neurology,
Case Western Reserve University
Professor of Neurology, Cognitive Science,
Psychiatry, Neuroscience, Psychology, Nursing,
Organizational Behavior and History
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Status:

We are active as an organization at ASBH and would like to be more active at IAB. We want to include participants from both IAB and ASBH on the same list, in the same way that FAB does.

Membership:

We maintain an e.mail list currently of

about 200 people, but have no identified dues paying "membership" or sign-up process.

Goals:

To encourage exploration, scholarship, and activism regarding issues and theories that combine the concerns of the global environment, public health, and health care.

Projects:

Most recently, we held a joint paper session at ASBH (Philadelphia, Oct., 2004) with the "Philosophy" affinity group. We also held an "Environmental Bioethics" affinity group meeting with paper presentations. We also helped to plan and present the "Activism" pre-conference at ASBH. We are currently working together to submit abstracts to the 2005 ASBH meeting, to publish papers on topics related to our mission with The Cambridge Quarterly, and to build resources for interested scholars.

3. ETHICS AND INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES NETWORK

Coordinator(s) / contact(s):

Robert M. Veatch, Ph.D.
veatchr@georgetown.edu
Hans Reinders, Ph.D.
J.S.Reinders@esau.th.vu.nl

Membership:

About 500.

Goals:

To promote the discussion of ethical dimensions of intellectual disabilities.

Projects:

Publication of Newsletter on Ethics and Intellectual Disability.

4. INTERNATIONAL NETWORK ON FEMINIST APPROACHES TO BIOETHICS (FAB)

Coordinator(s)/ contact(s):

Susan Dodds, Ph.D. (Australia)
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Fax: +1 902.494.3865
Francoise.Baylis@dal.ca

Network website <http://www.fabnet.org>

Membership:

230 members from 26 countries.

Goals:

promote scholarly work in feminist bioethics foster international collaborations and facilitate the exchange of information among feminist bioethicists support the work of women in developing countries encourage and facilitate the participation of un- and under-employed people in the activities of the FAB Network (especially the bi-annual meeting)

Projects:

investigating possible new journal on feminist bioethics to promote feminist scholarship country representatives to promote networking and sharing of information (e.g., abortion project they are spearheading) maintain listserv to encourage communication and sharing of information interactive website and electronic newsletter to extend the reach of FAB (all the while being sure that paper copies will; be available to those who

cannot access the web) Audre Lorde Fund to assist with the goal of facilitating the participation of members with limited travel funds bi-annual conference that is recognized as pre-eminent feminist bioethics congress which attracts participants from both developed and developing nations

5. GENETICS NETWORK

Coordinator(s)/ contact(s):

Darryl Macer, Ph.D.
Regional Advisor in Social and Human Sciences for Asia and the Pacific
Regional Unit for Social and Human Sciences in Asia and the Pacific (RUSHSAP)
UNESCO Bangkok
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Tel.: +66-2-391-0682
Tel: +66-2-391-0577 ext 141
Fax: +66-2-391-0866
Email: d.macer@unescobkk.org

Membership:

On line list, 100+.

Goals:

Genetics Network, and the EJAIB that replaced the Eubios Ethics Institute Newsletter, are forums for exchange within the Genetics Network. The Network will facilitate international communication about research, publications, meetings, etc. related to ethical, legal and social issues raised by both human and non-human applications of genetics and biotechnology. You are invited to send reprints, statements of research interests and activities, notices, news, etc.

Projects:

Short description of main projects publication of papers in EJAIB and meetings, home page and members list: <http://www.biol.tsukuba.ac.jp/~macer/net.html>

6. PUBLIC HEALTH ETHICS

Coordinator(s) / contact(s):

Angus Dawson, Dr.

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Keele University,
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UK
E.mail: a.j.dawson@keele.ac.uk
Centre Website: <http://www.keele.ac.uk/ethics>
Personal Webpage:
<http://www.keele.ac.uk/depts/ep/peak/ajdawson.html>
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Marcel Verweij, Dr.

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University of Sheffield
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Sheffield S1 4DA
UK
Tel: +44 (0)114 222 0818
Fax: +44 (0)114 222 0791

Membership:

We have over 100 members on our email list

Goals:

To raise the profile of public health ethics as an area of research (within the IAB and in the academic environment in general)
To encourage and actively engage in research and debate about ethical issues in public health policy and practice
To encourage and facilitate international research collaborations in the area of public health ethics

Projects:

These are mainly informal collaborations between individuals. However, we are hoping to have a one day public health ethics satellite conference attached to the IAB Conference in Beijing in 2006.

"Dormant" Networks

Others Networks have been created along the years. Unfortunately, due to different circumstances, some are now inactive and some others have not been responsive. A Network is considered inactive when: it is officially declared as so, by its coordinator(s), to the Board of Directors or directly to the Network Coordinator; or two years after the last information of activity sent to the Board, to the Network Coordinator or to the Newsletter. Inactive or Unresponsive Networks, both fall into the category of "dormant".

We ask all former or present Network Coordinators who, due to unknown circumstances, did not receive a message (e.mail or/and letter) inquiring about their Networks, to please get in contact with the IAB's Network Coordinator, Maria Patrão Neves (patrao@notes.uac.pt).

The Inactive Networks are:

BIOETHICS AND INFORMATICS
CORRUPTION AND HONESTY IN HEALTH CARE SYSTEMS
REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

The Unresponsive Networks are:

ABORIGINAL BIOETHICAL ISSUES
ALLOCATION OF HEALTH CARE RESOURCES
DEFINITION OF DEATH www.changesurfer.com/BD
ETHICS IN PUBLIC HEALTH & PREVENTIVE MEDICINE (INTERPHEIN)
HOSPITAL ETHICS COMMITTEES
INFORMED CONSENT
INTERNATIONAL STUDENT BIOETHICS INITIATIVE (ISBI) - www.studentbioethics.org
ISLAMIC BIOETHICS
NURSING ETHICS
PSYCHIATRIC ETHICS
RESEARCH WITH HUMAN SUBJECTS
SANCTITY OF LIFE

Benefits and obligations of a IAB's Network

A IAB's Network has some benefits and obligations.

It benefits from:

- ◆ space on the newsletter to announce the activities that is promoting;
- ◆ possibility to held a special session / event during the World Congress of Bioethics, with the agreement of the organizers;
- ◆ professional assistance from the Board on the organization of events.

It is obliged to:

- ◆ report once a year to the IAB's Board of Directors or directly to the Network's Coordinator;
- ◆ announce in each activity the filiation to the IAB;
- ◆ enhance membership.

How to proceed to organize a Network

In accordance with the spirit of the constitution of the IAB, its Board welcomes the formation of new Networks.

It requires a written proposal, stating the aims and objectives of the network (which must be consistent with the IAB's interest in promoting open dialogue on matters relating to bioethics), and a short description of how the Network is expected to function. The proposal must be signed by two persons (IAB's members) coordinators -, from different countries, and sent to the Board of Directors, addressed to the IAB's President or to the IAB's Network Coordinator. It will then be presented, discussed and voted by the Board, that is free to outline some suggestions.

How to proceed to reactivate an Inactive Network

All the Inactive Networks can be revitalized by any two IAB members coordinators , from different countries that propose to do so, following the above indicated procedure.

Create or reactivate an International Network and benefit from the IAB's support

The IAB's Network Coordinator

M. Patrão Neves

patrao@notes.uac.pt

IAB Board Elections

The IAB is holding its Board elections. Voting period is from April 1 to 30, 2005. Below is the list of candidates:

1. Matti Häyry
 2. Thomas Pogge
 3. Alexander Capron
 4. Iva Sorta-Bilajac
 5. George J. Agich
 6. Hans-Martin Sass
 7. Bebe Loff
 8. Xiaomei Zhai
 9. Jocelyn Downie
 10. Yanguang Wang
 11. Paul McNeill
 12. Jayapaul Azariah
 13. Renzo Pegoraro
 14. Qiu Ren-Zong
 15. Jaqueline Scully
 16. Sahin Aksoy
 17. José Eduardo Siqueira
 18. Jing-Bao Nie
 19. Susan Dodds
 20. Dirce Guilhem
 21. Marcel Verweij
 22. Jan Bernheim
 23. Werner Wolbert
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