

Centre of Biomedical Ethics and Culture, SIUT

Bioethics Links

One of the aims of the Centre of Biomedical Ethics and Culture, SIUT in Karachi is to develop a national network of professionals interested in medical ethics, and to foster international dialogues and collaborations. This issue highlights our efforts to do so. Editor

JEVAY PAKISTAN!

*Sahin Aksoy**

International meetings are important for academicians. They not only help to increase scientific knowledge of the attendees but also give visiting faculty and participants an opportunity to meet people from different countries and exchange information about their countries. But just as national meetings are generally organized in touristic and historically appealing places like Antalya, Istanbul, etc., international ones are often held in cities in the USA, Europe and exotic Far East countries. This may be normal, but what is abnormal is the reaction you get when you say you are going to a country other than one of these for an academic event.

I write this article from Karachi, Pakistan. Yes! It is the same Karachi where more than 50 people lost their lives in a recent, failed suicide attempt to assassinate Ms. Benazir Bhutto. I want to share my experience with you before I came to Karachi. When I applied for a leave from my Institution to attend this academic event in Karachi my application was discussed by the University Board.

Someone from the Board said "Sahin Aksoy went also to Lebanon and Iran before. What is he doing in 'such places'?" This could be considered as a sincere and thoughtful inquiry if I did not also go to the USA (terrorism, burglary, racism, etc.), UK (terro-

rism, burglary, racism, etc.), Israel (terrorism, racism, etc.), Japan (earthquake), the Philippines (earthquake, tsunami), and Thailand (AIDS). However there were no such questions raised about my travels to these places although there are many different potential risks waiting there. There were also some friends and family members who were really concerned about my security and said "Are you sure? The situation is not good in Pakistan." But everyday now there are instances of people dying from different violent events in different countries around the world.

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Dr. Aksoy (fourth from left) with students of PGD Class of 07

*Harran University, Sanliurfa, Turkey
(Dr. Aksoy was visiting Professor at CBEC in December 2007)

Building Networks: The Karachi Bioethics Group

*Nida Wahid Bashir**

The Karachi Bioethics Group (KBG), initiated in 2004, is a forum for healthcare professionals who share an interest in bioethics. It provides an opportunity for members to identify and discuss ethical issues relevant to Pakistan, and to keep themselves informed and educated through discussions of emerging bioethical issues. KBG is gradually also beginning to serve as a means to sensitize the community at large about many of the ethical issues that surface within the realities of medical education and practice in the country.

Professionals from both private and public medical institutions including Dow University of Health Sciences, National Institute of Child Health, Kidney Center, Ziauddin Medical University, Aga Khan University (AKU), Hamdard University, Liaquat National Hospital, Sobhraj Hospital, Lyari General Hospital, Patel Hospital, Sindh Institute of Urology and Transplantation, the Center of Biomedical Ethics and Culture (CBEC), and medical journalists are members of KBG. The usual number of participants varies from ten to thirty

at these meetings.

Birth: The lack of opportunities available in Karachi for regular discussions and promoting education in bioethical issues was felt strongly by participants attending a clinical ethics symposium held in October 2004 at The Aga Khan University Hospital. As a solution, some of those present suggested creating a forum in which healthcare related professionals could begin to meet periodically. Physicians from the Patel Hospital offered to host a meeting on December 13 to discuss this idea further. In this inaugural meeting, which was attended by staff from Ziauddin Hospital, Aga Khan University Hospital, Patel Hospital and CBEC as well as some medical journalists, it was decided to form the KBG which would meet on a quarterly basis.

2005: The objectives of KBG that were formulated include providing a platform for discussions of ethical issues relevant to Pakistan, improving the members' knowledge of bioethics, sharing and creating local ethical guidelines in needed areas, tapping common resources for self education and also helping to

*Nida Bashir is Consultant Surgeon in Patel Hospital.

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Pageant of man's intellectual advance from the times of Socrates to Einstein. Mural by Sadequain

[Http://www.sadequainfoundation.com](http://www.sadequainfoundation.com)

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I have a question for those who worry about travel to countries such as Pakistan - "where do you get your information?" From CNN, BBC, AFP and Reuters. If you listen only to them, you will come to believe that nowadays the Turkish Army is undertaking a Kurdish genocide in Northern Iraq. But when I look at Turkish internet sites and Turkish newspapers I see that this is only a limited operation against some terrorist PKK camps, and with no loss of civilian lives. Many international news agencies portray the countries as they wish them to be seen. Do not believe them blindly, but search for accurate information to assess the real situation.

I want to give a call to you, you my fellow academicians in Turkey. Our image that was portrayed abroad as compared to the real situation that existed about 25-30 years ago is what is happening to Pakistan now. So do come to countries such as Pakistan. Participate in, and help to organize academic meetings in these countries. If you believe that you have knowledge to impart then come to teach them. Help them to become better. Of course there is no Trafalgar Square, Eiffel Tower, St. Paul Cathedral, and Manhattan Street in Pakistan, but there are people here who want to hug you when you tell them that you come from Turkey. They are open to all kinds of comments and suggestions you make and they welcome all information you offer.

I have a final comment for readers who may think I write these words because I live in Sanliurfa, a rural city bordering Syria, rather than a big city like Istanbul or Ankara, and therefore I visit countries like Pakistan, Iran and Lebanon, rather than the USA and Europe. All my life, except for the last 8 years, was spent in Ankara, Napoli in Italy, and Manchester in England. And all my academic activities, except a few of them, have taken place in the USA, Europe, and countries in the Far East. So, I know "both worlds," and stand by what I have written here.

POSTSCRIPT: An hour after I sent my article to the *Medimagazin*, a terrible thing happened in Pakistan. Ms. Benazir Bhutto was killed by a suicide bomber in Rawalpindi during a political rally she was leading. There is a sense of profound shock and disbelief everywhere. I am sitting in my hotel in Karachi hoping to be able to fly back to Turkey as scheduled. I wish to write this last minute note just to say that as a citizen of a country in which similar "games" were played to create similar chaos by certain "powers," I stand behind every word I have written above. But now, I shout even louder "JEVAYPAKISTAN!"

Editor's Note:

Jevay means "long live" in Urdu.

Professor Aksoy was in Karachi during December 2007 as a Visiting Professor in CBEC and as External Examiner for the PGD course in Biomedical Ethics.

This is the translation of an article he wrote for *Medimagazine*, a weekly Turkish medical magazine, and is begin re-printed here with permission.



A case presentation in progress during a CBEC Workshop on Clinical Ethics in Sultan Qaboos University, Muscat, Oman in January 2007

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increase general awareness of the public about ethical issues. It was decided that the membership of the group would be on individual basis and membership criteria were kept simple to encourage participation. Essentially any one interested in issues of bioethics could join, but in order to retain membership and be included on the email list, attending a sufficient number of meetings was made mandatory.

Members from Patel Hospital offered to host the meetings for the first year. Some of the topics taken up for discussion in this year included "informed consent," "stem cell research," and also "physicians and pharmaceutical relationships in Pakistan."

As one of the objectives of the KBG is public awareness, the group decided to issue a press release, which was published in Daily Business Recorder and The News, voicing their concern over the commercialization of an experimental technology, "retro-differentiation of stem cells," by Tristem Corporation as a therapeutic modality for a wide spectrum of ailments. The press release expressed concern about the fact that Tristem Corporation had been asked to halt similar activities in India just a few months before they moved to Pakistan, and this news had been covered by several newspapers and journals including the BMJ. The press release stressed that the claims of therapeutic utility of retro-differentiation made by the company were unsubstantiated by human studies conducted anywhere in the world, and that the company was actually experimenting on human subjects under the guise of therapy.

2006: The host for the KBG meetings for the year 2006 was AKU. The salient features of KBG activities in this year included a press release on an incidence reported widely in the press and the media of a "stolen kidney." A patient had lodged a complaint with the police that a surgeon in a private hospital had removed his kidney while performing surgery

CBEC hosts MRPS Meeting

CBEC-SIUT hosted the seventeenth annual meeting of the Medical Research Society of Pakistan on March 22, 2008. Farhat Moazam was the keynote speaker and spoke on "Of Mice and Men: Genetic Engineering and Chimeras, Promises and Pitfalls."

for his gall bladder. The press release highlighted the need to protect patient rights, create mechanisms to curb such activities, and the moral obligations of physicians towards patients to restore credibility of the medical profession.

2007: The KBG was hosted by CBEC-SIUT this year. The year was marked by a review and refinement of the objectives and terms of reference of KBG. A new emphasis was added to the role of KBG as an advocate of teaching ethics to medical students as an integral part of their learning. In one meeting, the group discussed the idea of teaching and learning bioethics through art and literature. This concept was introduced with the help of two paintings by 20th century artists "TB Harlem" by Alice Neel, and "Portrait of Rocco and His Son" by Renato Guttuso. Members were asked to reflect on these and express their impressions. There was a great response from the audience at the idea of exposing medical students and trainees to various art forms to improve their power of observation and to encourage "out of the box" thinking.

In another session, the group noted with concern the increasing instances of plagiarism being reported from universities in Pakistan.

*Continued on page 5***World Congress of Bioethics**

The 9th World Congress of Bioethics of the International Bioethics Association is scheduled to take place from 3rd-8th September 2008 at Rijeka/ Opatija, Croatia.

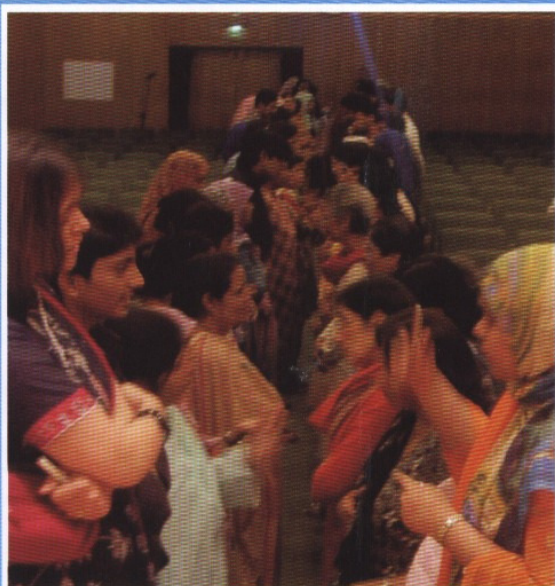
Dr. Moazam has been invited for a key note address "Live Kidney Transplantation in Pakistan: Kinship Language and Metaphors."

Dr. Aamir Jafarey will be participating in a panel discussion on "Human Organ Transplantation: Trade Regulations and Law - perspectives from Asia."

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This issue had been picked up by the lay press after the Higher Education Commission (HEC) had asked a university to act against faculty members who had been charged with plagiarism. It was reported that the university in question was unwilling to follow HEC directives and was keen to let the offending faculty go with little more than a reprimand. A press release was submitted about the position of KBG unanimously endorsing the initiative by HEC against plagiarism. KBG urged all institutions to develop a policy on plagiarism and develop mechanisms for its implementation. This press release was published in the Daily Business Recorder and The News.

In another meeting, the group also discussed the newly promulgated Human Organ and Tissue Transplantation Ordinance 2007, noting its strengths and weaknesses. The group expressed concerns about the



An example of audience interaction during moral games being played at the 2nd CBEC-UNESCO Bioethics Education conference at SIUT

flawed process of selection of donors which would add to the vulnerability of female donors.

2008: The KBG meeting place this year is the Ziauddin Medical University Hospital in Clifton. Due to the sustained interest of members, it was decided to increase the frequency of meetings to once every two months. To date, the group has discussed issues of "consent in ICU settings," highlighting the need for hospitals to create policies on this matter. The group also discussed "collusion of physician and state," an issue highlighted in the press after the events of December 2007 and the unsatisfactory role of the physicians in the issuance of a postmortem report following the assassination of Benazir Bhutto. KBG condemned the pressures placed on physicians who were involved in the case, and the practice of state coercion of physicians in falsifying medical reports. A press release was submitted highlighting KBG concerns about coercion of physicians by the government, and the need for their protection against this practice.

Another issue taken up in 2008 was instances of illegal renal transplants occurring even after the promulgation of the Ordinance, 2007. In this regard, a major achievement in 2008 was a combined Pakistan Medical Association (PMA) and KBG session on the issue of illegal practices after passage of the organ transplantation law. The session was held at the PMA house in Karachi on May 10,

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Asian Bioethics Conference

The 9th Asian Bioethics Conference (ABC9) on the theme "Healthy and productive life in harmony with nature," is scheduled to take place from 3rd to 7th November, 2008, Jogjakarta, Indonesia. It is being hosted by the Indonesian National Bioethics Commission.

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CBEC Graduates: Success Stories

*Aamir Jafarey**

The year long, part time Postgraduate Diploma (PGD) Course in Biomedical Ethics was initiated in 2006, and serves as the flagship program for the Center of Biomedical Ethics and Culture (CBEC). The PGD targets healthcare related professionals in all provinces of Pakistan aiming to strengthen national capacity in bioethics. Its objectives include to help develop teaching programs in ethics, and to create a bioethics network across the country.

Twenty two professionals from various institutions, private and public, across Pakistan have graduated from the PGD so far and another 10 are expected to do so in December this year. Many of them have managed to begin bioethics programs in their own institutions. We present a few examples of what we consider success stories.

PGD Class of 2006

Yasmin Wajahat, a Consultant Gynecologist at the Sobhraj Maternity Home in Karachi, has successfully initiated a program in medical ethics for her residents and graduate

trainees. Her focus is on ensuring that consents for surgical interventions are obtained ethically and with appropriate involvement of the female patients in an androcentric culture. Wajahat has also introduced a monitoring system to assess the impact of ethics education on trainee performance, and to collect data to see whether informed consent forms meet ethical and legal specifications.

Farkhanda Ghafoor, a researcher by training, has initiated an IRB at the Shaikh Zaid Hospital in Lahore and serves as its Coordinator. In her role as an educator and trainer in the institution, Ghafoor has also organized well attended workshops on Research Ethics and Clinical Ethics for the faculty and staff in collaboration with CBEC.

Faisal Ghani and Inayat Memon, Consultant Surgeon and Pathologist respectively, are initiating an ambitious bioethics program for students in Liaquat University of Medical and Health Sciences (LUMHS) in Jamshoro, Sindh. This is the first government university in Pakistan to introduced ethics education as a regular component of the medical curricula for students.

* Dr. Aamir Jafarey is Associates Professor at CBEC

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Istanbul Summit on Organ Trafficking, Tourism and Commerce

April 30 to May 2, 2008

This three day Summit Meeting held in Istanbul brought together over 150 delegates from 78 countries around the world, and included healthcare professionals, social scientists, ethicists, government officials, and WHO representatives. Adibul Hasan Rizvi and Anwar Naqvi of the Sindh Institute of Urology and Transplantation (SIUT), and Farhat Moazam of the Center of Biomedical Ethics and Culture, SIUT represented Pakistan in the Summit.

Discussions focused on the increasing and unethical practice of organ commercialism and trafficking in the face of global organ shortages, and the resulting exploitation of the poorest and most vulnerable populations of the world. Delegates deliberated on recommendations that will assist countries in curtailing such practices.

A consensus report and Summit recommendations will be published and made available for distribution in the form of "The Declaration of Istanbul on Organ Trafficking and Transplant Tourism" in the near future. The Istanbul Summit was sponsored by The Transplantation Society, and the International Society of Nephrology.



Clinical Ethics Workshop organized by Khizar and Hussain of the PGD Class of 07 at Shifa College of Medicine, Islamabad



Research Ethics Workshop in progress at Shaikh Zaid Hospital, Lahore in November 2007. This was organized by Ghafoor of the PGD Class of 06.

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Ethics sessions have also been introduced in the 3 other medical colleges affiliated with LUMHS in Larkana, in Sukkur. Ethics curricula include assessment of students' knowledge through questions in their examinations papers. Ghani has also been asked by the Vice Chancellor of LUMHS to organize an Ethical Review Committee for the University and to serve as the Coordinator.

PGD Class of 2007

Bushra Khizar and Ashraf Hussain, Internist and Cardiologist respectively, are faculty members of the Shifa International College of Medicine in Islamabad. With their colleagues, both are playing key roles in the introduction of a comprehensive bioethics curriculum for medical students. The program is modular in nature, and integrates bioethics into subjects taught during the 5 years of medical college. Khizar and Hussain have also organized 2 workshops, on Clinical Ethics and Research Ethics, in collaboration with CBEC.

Naseer Chaudhry, a full time Orthodontist on the faculty of Fatima Memorial Hospital, College of Medicine and Dentistry in Lahore, is the first in Pakistan to introduce ethics education sessions for dental students. This is part of the Behavioral Sciences curriculum, and will include assessment of students in their internal examinations.

Samina Mansoor, Consultant Pathologist at Shaukat Khanum Cancer Memorial Hospital in

Lahore, has started a monthly Bioethics Group in her hospital. The objective is professional and staff self education in ethics through discussion of emerging international issues and those relevant to Pakistan. The group includes faculty, staff and residents, and is open to professionals from other institutions in the city.

Salahuddin, a Physician and Biochemist, is a member of the Hamdard College of Medicine and Dentistry in Karachi. He has initiated bioethics lectures and interactive sessions for pre-clinical medical students. This is the first effort in Hamdard College to introduce ethics to medical students.

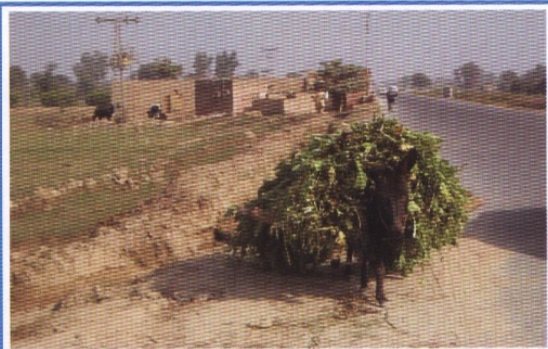
Bushra Shirazi and Moin Siddiqui, Consultant Surgeon and Pathologist respectively, have begun bioethics sessions with medical students who rotate with them in the Ziauddin Medical University in Karachi. These sessions will be incorporated into the comprehensive ethics curriculum being planned by the University to cover all 5 years of medical education.

Ali Lanewala, Consultant Pediatric Nephrologist in the Sindh Institute of Urology and Transplantation (SIUT) in Karachi, has begun Ethics Grand Rounds. Academic faculty, staff, students and trainees of SIUT meet to discuss simulated cases about frequently encountered ethical dilemmas during clinical practice. Professionals from other Karachi institutions are also invited to participate in this quarterly event.

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2008. The speakers on the occasion included legal expert Justice (retd.) Fakhruddin G Ibrahim, Leader of the House in the Senate, Mr. Raza Rabbani, and CBEC Chairperson Dr. Moazam who highlighted the illegal practices still continuing in Punjab. Mr. Rabbani promised to follow up with the Ministry of Health and also to notify the Government of Azad Kashmir about reports that organ trade had now shifted there. As a follow up, Senator Rabbani has sent copies of his correspondence with the Health Minister as well as the Government of Azad Kashmir to CBEC.

Conclusion: In the three and a half years of its existence, KBG is beginning to develop into an effective group of individuals interested in promoting bioethics in the city. Over time the group will hopefully evolve into the collective conscience of the medical community.



Donkeys on Autopilot!
In villages around Sargodha donkeys are trained to deliver, unaccompanied, fodder from one area to another several miles away. All creatures are trainable!

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Asian Task Force on Organ Trafficking in Asia submits Report

In January 2008, the Asian Task Force (TF) Published its report entitled "Recommendations on the Prohibition, Prevention and Elimination of Organ Trafficking in Asia." The TF expressed its concerns about the increasing notoriety of Asia as a hub for transplant tourism, and focused on regional efforts and cooperation to tackle this problem. Recommendations include urging Asian countries to take steps to prohibit and prevent trafficking of organs, achieve national self-sufficiency in organ transplantation, restrict organ transplantation to recipients with the same nationality as the donors, and to introduce measures to safeguard long term physical and psychological health of donors.

Members of the TF who met in Taipei, Taiwan through 2007 for discussions and drafting of the recommendations include: Chang-Fa Lo (TF Chairman, Taipei), Alireza Bagheri (Iran), Michael Bos (Netherlands), Leonardo De Castro (Philippines), Francis DelMonico (USA), Sudhir Gupta (India), Ryuichi Ida (Japan), Bagher Larjani (Iran), Rui-Peng Lei (China), Farhat Moazam (Pakistan), Nancy Scheper-Hughes (USA), Daniel Fu-Chang Tsai (Taiwan), Robert Veatch (USA), and Daniel Wikler (USA).

A simplified version of the Taipei Recommendations can be accessed at : http://www.law.ntu.edu.tw/center/ntucels/en/03activities.asp?M_ID=399&tb_index=510&layer_ID=3

The Asian Task Force on Organ Trafficking was sponsored by the Office of International Affairs, National Taiwan University, and the Department of Health, Taiwan.