

EDITORIAL

Greetings Readers and Members!

It has been a very hectic 2017 for all of us especially in the Bangladesh Bioethics Society. Bangladesh Bioethics Society (BBS) in collaboration with Directorate General of Health Service (DGHS), Ministry of Health Bangladesh and American University of Sovereign Nation (AUSN), USA, had organized a “Graduation Ceremony and Intensive Bioethics Training Programme” on 15-16 July, 2017 at IEDCR Auditorium, DGSH, Mohakhali, Dhaka.

Prof Dr Syed Modasser Ali, Chairman, BMRC & Former Health Advisor of Prime Minister, People’s Republic of Bangladesh was the Chief Guest in this programme. Special Guests were Prof Dr. Mohammad Abul Klam Azad, Director General (DG), DGHS; Dr Ferdousi Haque, Director, Planning & Research, DGHS; Prof. Dr. Meerjady Sabrina Flora, Director, Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) respectively. Prof. Darryl Macer, President, AUSN, Prof. Taslima Mansoor, President of BBS and Prof. Shamima Lasker, Secretary General of BBS put in great efforts to make all events successful and we are really proud of our Team.

Two members of BBS have graduated from AUSN, USA in July 2017 and honored by BBS through this programme. Many members are enrolling in the Masters or Ph.D programmes and we foresee a large community of Alumni in the near future. Bangladesh graduates seem to be leading the graduate programme and we congratulate the member of BBS for their intense work and commitment to moving forward the agenda of Bioethics.

In this issue, several issues on bioethics has been covered and following is a brief summary of the articles:

Astronomic Bioethics: Terraforming X Planetary protection by Dario Palhares and Íris Almeida dos Santos in their paper provide a philosophical viewpoint on Astrobiology and the precise definition of life. They argue that since all living beings have a cellular structure, so the basic definition of life is based on this hence the search for extraterrestrial life is restricted to extraterrestrial cells. There are two principles related to Astronomic Bioethics: planetary protection and terraforming. Planetary protection is based on the fear of interplanetary cross-infection and possible ecological damages caused by alien living beings. Terraforming is the intention of modifying the environmental conditions of the neighbouring planets in such a way that human colonisation would be possible. These principles lead to the formulation of the concept of Ecopoiesis, a concept related to the creation of new ecosystems in other planets. So, by taking portions of the terrestrial permafrost, or ocean or soil, to other planets and if a single species could grow, a new ecosystem would start. The authors conclude that Ecopoiesis should be the bioethical principle to guide practices and research in Astrobiology.

ZIKA Virus Disease as Public Health Emergency and Ethics by Rhyddhi Chakraborty and Edmond Fernandes argue that Zika virus infection has its ethical implications beyond the reproductive health of women. Referring to the recent Zika virus infection in Brazil the authors recommend highlighting the lapses in the current Zika ethics consultations and recommendations, and claim that public health emergencies need to focus on the ethical vision of health capability to act and promote sustainable healthcare during emergency times and normal period. They recommend that during public health emergencies, healthcare systems should focus on the health

care of women, and the national healthcare systems should be adequately capable to maintain global health equity.

In the paper on **Nutritional Status, Personal Hygiene and Health Seeking Behavior of the Workers of British American Tobacco Company, Dhaka, Bangladesh** by M J Haque, A Awal, M Rahman and J Sazzad report on a cross sectional study carried out among the workers of British American Tobacco Company, Dhaka to explore their nutritional status, personal hygiene and health seeking behavior particularly because they are working in a tobacco processing company. The sample size was 179 which were selected purposively. The study showed that out of 179 respondents 89 (49.7%) were in the age groups of 30-39 years and the mean age of the respondents were 31.99 ± 6.01 years. Majority (53.6%) respondents informed that they learned about personal hygiene from television, and majority (69.83%) of the respondents used only water as materials for hand washing. This study provided some important information which might help the concerned authority to take appropriate measures to improve the health status of the workers. The authors conclude integrated programs of health promotion in companies should be implemented. The people should be motivated about maintaining personal hygiene and sustain good health habit. Occupational health, safety and healthy working environment should be maintained by the authority.

In the article on **Cervical Cancer and Ethical issues in HPV Vaccination**, authors Fariha Haseen and Sadia Akther Sony have focused on the ethical aspects of mass cervical cancer immunization programme. The authors present information on the prevalence of Cervical cancer globally which according to World Health Organization (WHO) is sexually transmitted by the Human Papilloma Virus HPV, one of the major causes of cervical cancer. Cervical cancer is one of the top five cancers that affect women around the world.

Every year more than 250,000 people die from Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) infection. In June 2006, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved a new vaccine for women, Gardasil, produced by the pharmaceutical company Merck that protects against infection by certain strains of HPV. Universal vaccination of girls and young women may bring up ethical challenges which might make it difficult for smooth implementation of the vaccination campaigns. Most parents expressed the desire for more information about the vaccine before they agree to vaccinate their children. The authors conclude that it is the basic right of the parents to have access to all information regarding the HPV vaccine and if the parents consider the vaccine inappropriate for their daughters they must have the right to refuse to vaccinate their daughters. The ultimate decision on vaccinate the children should be taken by their parents to ensure parental autonomy.

Thank you Authors! Readers, let us all commit ourselves in ensuring ethical standards in all our lives and work. Please continue to submit interesting and thought provoking articles. Seasons' Greetings to all!

Tahera Ahmed,
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