Summer 2020 Ethical Issues

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Editor’s Note

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Perhaps like no other summer in past decades, Summer 2020 began with the COVID-19 pandemic; and, for the United States, the killing of George Floyd. Both events served to catapult ethical discussions regarding equitable delegation of resources and the reality of persistent discriminatory practices as evidenced by capricious and arbitrary treatment of ethnic minorities.

The current issue of the Online Journal of Health Ethics reflects the above ethical climate and debates. V. Rama-na Dhara of Emory University (USA) shares a haiku on the Corona Virus. Included are the vectors, modes of transmission and spread of SARS, MERS, and SARS-Cov-2. Statistics confirm that ethnic minorities are at greater risk of succumbing to death due to COVID-19. Dr. Leonard Vernon, the newest Layout Manager of the Online Journal of Health Ethics, from Sherman College of Chiropractic (USA), shares a compelling article which details egregious human subjects’ research under the auspices of U.S. researchers who violated all principles of human subject research. These studies were conducted in some of the nation’s most prestigious research centers.

Anna Shapiro of the College of Our Lady of the Elms (USA) along with the Online Journal of Health Ethics’s Associate Editor, Dr. Peter DePergola II, attempt to make a case for support of presumed consent and priority allocation for organ donation legislation in the United States. The national organ shortage is their impetus to begin these discussions. In essence, they present the example of several other developed countries that operate under the principle of presumed consent and priority allocation policies for those presenting in a hospital. Family members are not allowed to witness the deaths, births, admissions, or any of the events occurring in healthcare. Has the system earned this trust? Several resources are shared to aid in recognizing and addressing implicit and explicit racial biases in healthcare. Also presented are suggested policies to bring about a more equitable response to the COVID-19 crisis.

The Online Journal of Health Ethics

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