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Winners and Losers in the American Political Debates of the Nation's Health: An Ethical and Moral Dilemma

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Winners and Losers in the American Political Debates of the Nation's Health: An Ethical and Moral Dilemma

From the Editor

The third and final issue of the Online Journal of Health Ethics for 2020 presents two poignant articles that are ranked with current health ethics and moral issues as the world races to a resolve for the COVID pandemic. There appears to be no easy, quick-fix solutions to the pandemic that has claimed over 1.11 million lives worldwide in this first wave. The Gellert article addresses his view of the U.S. government's political response and the Gunn article presents an ethical perspective of the emerging promised vaccine to halt the virus.

Perhaps unlike any other time in recent history, decisions regarding health of the general public has taken on a strange polarity in that according to Dr. George Gellert, evidence-based and science-based public health disease control measures related to COVID 19 spread has now been spilt along political party lines. Dr. Gellert, a physician epidemiologist who has served in domestic and international public health, posits that the current political administration has ignored the science related to ways and means to slow and halt the spread of the COVID pandemic to the detriment of the American people. He adds that because we are all interdependent in any communicable disease epidemic, denial of the science constitutes an ethical breach that has severe detrimental and destructive effects. He concludes in his article, *An Epidemiological View of the 2020 U.S. Presidential Election: COVID-19 and the Ethics of Science Denial*, that voters must consider the appreciation and/or non-appreciation of evidence-based science by politicians in decision making which results in loss of life.

The second article: *Abbey and George*, by Dr. Jeannie Gunn, Professor of Nursing and President of the Transcultural Nursing Society, presents a parody of two aborted fetuses. An attempt is made to present both sides of the abortion argument such as when life begins, belief in God versus nonbelief in God and the issue most closely linked to the current political debate, the possible use of aborted fetuses in COVID vaccine development. She adds that the current U.S. administration is not supportive of the use of aborted fetuses. If the use of aborted fetuses could halt the pandemic, is that justifiable? This article is certain to engender the circular ethical arguments regarding the sanctity of life.

With the American elections being just a few short weeks away, it is evident that regardless of who is elected, the reality of a pandemic will not dissipate upon election day. Hence, I wish to reiterate the advice of CDC: (1) Wash your hands frequently, (2) Avoid close contact, (3) Cover your mouth and nose with a mask when around others, (4) Cover coughs and sneezes, (5) Clean and disinfect, and (6) Protect your health this Flu Season.

Readers are asked to read both articles and join our Facebook discussion. You are free to agree, disagree and/or share your own opinions. This is indeed one of the few times in this century where the whole world is grappling with a similar problem – the pandemic. Know that the contributions of authors to *the Online Journal of Health Ethics* does not necessarily represent the opinions of the editors nor the University of Southern Mississippi, the home of the journal. We do, however, appreciate the contributions of authors and welcome the ensuing healthy retorts and discussions.

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Editor-in-Chief