

EDITORIAL**A Brief Overview of Bioethics****Abraham Haileamlak, MD, Professor of Pediatrics and Child Health**DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/ejhs.v33i3.1>

The inception of bioethics in medicine can be traced back to 500 B.C.E, the Hippocratic Oath in antiquity (1). The phenomenon possibly goes back in time if one considers the Code of Hammurabi (1750 B.C.E.), which contains some such written practices pertaining to medical practice (2).

In the modern era, several concerns used to be raised by researchers and practitioners since the 1900s. However, bioethics and its institutionalization in the academia were emphasized in the 1970s, following influential publications that suggest bioethics to be a global movement in order to foster concern for the environment and ethics (3). Although bioethics was seen as more or less identical with medical ethics at the beginning, with continued discussion it is defined both as a field of study and professional practice, interested in ethical issues. As a multidisciplinary field of study, it focuses on ethical, social, and legal issues that arise in biomedicine and biomedical research. As a professional practice, it encompasses medical ethics (which focuses on issues in healthcare); research ethics (which focuses issues in the conduct of research); environmental ethics (which focuses on issues pertaining to the relationship between human activities and the environment); and public health ethics (which addresses ethical issues in public health) (4).

Whether they are minor or major, we face ethical issues on our day-to-day provision of healthcare and research undertakings. In the past five decades, ethical and legal frameworks for obtaining consent have evolved plus guidelines have been created and are regularly revised (5). Obtaining patient or research participant consent for medical treatment and procedures or research participation is now a standard practice. While informed consent is a cornerstone of modern medical treatment and research practice, its

proper implementation is still questionable in some areas and circumstances.

We need to continue studying and practicing bioethics as it deals a fundamental question of how to live, how to die, and how society should both direct and relate to the new, startling biotechnological and reproductive advances of the 21st century (6). In another way of saying, bioethics promotes a set of principles to guide the interaction between the human race and living things. Furthermore, if a patient refuses medical intervention, it is considered as a negative right by bioethics.

The current issue of the Ethiopian Journal of Health Sciences, the third regular issue for the year 2023, contains an editorial, eighteen original articles and a case report. One of the original articles, in one way or in other, talks about bioethics which is a global agenda.

I invite readers to read through these articles and appreciate or utilize the contents. I also urge readers to forward comments and suggestions to the editor or the corresponding authors.

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