



Bioethics during COVID-19

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

and presentations from APRA «alumni»

Rome, July 3 – 4, 2020

15:00 – 18:30 Rome Time

Webinar via Zoom

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Introductory Remarks

Prof. P. Gonzalo Miranda LC. *Dean of the School of Bioethics, Ateneo Pontificio Regina Apostolorum. He serves as board member and treasurer of the International Federation of Centres and Institutes of Bioethics of a Personalist Inspiration (FIBIP). He is the director of the journal Studia Bioethica; he is also member of the Board of Directors of the journals Medicina e Morale (Rome), Medicina y Ética (Mexico), and Vida y Ética (Argentina).*

Pandemethics of COVID 19

Prof. P. Joseph Tham LC

Ateneo Pontificio Regina Apostolorum. Italia.

UNESCO Chair in Bioethics and Human Rights. Italy.

Born in Hong Kong and immigrated to Canada at the age of fifteen. At the University of Toronto, he first majored in mathematical sciences and then graduated from medical school. After several years of work as a family physician, he entered the seminary of the Legionaries of Christ and was ordained a priest in 2004. As a part of this preparation, he has obtained his degrees in philosophy and theology at Rome's Regina Apostolorum Pontifical university, where he also completed his postgraduate studies in bioethics. He successfully defended his doctoral dissertation with high honours on "The Secularization of Bioethics—A Critical History" under the direction of Dr. Edmund Pellegrino, former chairman of the President's Council on Bioethics. He presently teaches bioethics in Regina Apostolorum and was the former dean of the School of Bioethics. He is the editorial coordinator of Studia Bioethica and a fellow of the UNESCO Chair in Bioethics and Human Rights.

One of the most heard word to describe the COVID 19 pandemics is "unprecedented." But in fact, it doesn't even make the top 10 list of fatalities among all the epidemics in human history. Why is this time so different? This presentation will look at the changes in our perception that makes this epidemic indeed unprecedented. There is a misconception of medicine due to the increased availability and effectiveness of technology, but scientific knowledge is not really as certain and definitive as the media portrays and usually takes years of research to arrive at a consensus. Globalization and the accessibility of communication and social media makes the situation much more immediate. The number game gives us a false sense of control. All these perceptions, expectations, and inexact science are mixed with political and economic implications, generating uncertainties and anxieties in different spheres of society. The presentation will offer some conjectures of a Post-Covid future.

Covid-19: La decisione clinica in condizioni di carenza di risorse e il criterio del “Triage in Emergenza Pandemica”

Prof. Laura Palazzani

Universidad LUMSA. Italy.

Ordinario di filosofia del diritto, Università Lumsa; Vicepresidente del Comitato Nazionale per la Bioetica; Membro dell'European Group of Ethics in Science and New Technologies, Commissione Europea; Rappresentante della delegazione italiana presso il Comitato di Bioetica, Consiglio d'Europa; Membro del Comitato internazionale di Bioetica dell'Unesco; Componente del Comitato etico dell'Ospedale Pediatrico Bambino Gesù di Roma; Vicepresidente del Comitato etico dell'Ospedale Meyer (Firenze); Membro corrispondente della Pontificia Accademia per la Vita.

The pandemic and the ethical dilemma of limited resources: who to treat? The speaker assesses the issue of the allocation of health care resources in conditions of scarcity in the context of the bioethical discussion in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic and the question of access to treatment. The following theories are analysed: libertarian theory, utilitarian theory and theories that focus on equality between human beings, comparing conceptual premises and arguments critically, and referring to the main documents of national and international scientific societies and bioethics committees.

Ethical Challenges in Biomedical Research of COVID 19 Vaccine and Therapy

Prof. Alberto García Gómez

Ateneo Pontificio Regina Apostolorum

UNESCO Chair in Bioethics and Human Rights. Italy.

Doctor in Law from Complutense University in Madrid. Currently he is Director of the UNESCO Chair in Bioethics and Human Rights, established in Rome. Professor of Philosophy of Law, Constitutional and International Law at Regina Apostolorum University in Rome. Furthermore, he is a researcher of the Human Rights Institute at Complutense University (Madrid) and Member of the following Ethical Advisory Boards: ITERA (International Tissue Engineering Research Association) Life-Sciences Network, Cryo-Save and EU Projects CASCADE and REBORNE (within 7th Framework Program). Currently he is involved in EU project i-CONSENT (Improving the guidelines of informed consent, including vulnerable populations, under a gender perspective). For 5 years he has been member of the Steering Committee of Bioethics in the Council of Europe and in 2005 he has been honoured with the National Prize of the Spanish Royal Academy of Doctors in the field of legal and social sciences. In 2014 has been awarded with the "Otto Meyerhoff Award" for his outstanding achievements and innovations in the field of human rights and bioethics

We have a moral responsibility, during and after pandemic, to gather knowledge, support research and learn lessons for the future. Providing an overview of the core ethical values, problems and challenges when planning and carrying out research of a new vaccine or new therapeutic drugs would help to undertake this responsibility. Criteria concerning which research is eligible for fast-tracking must not mean lower quality standards in order to safeguard respect for human dignity. On the one hand, research subjects should receive adequate information. On the other, health public authorities, researchers and ethical committees should scrutinize that redistribution of existing research resources without preceding quality assurance in order to minimize mortality and illness in the population and other negative consequences for individuals and society.

Philosophy in the Context of the Coronavirus Pandemics

Prof. Lourdes Velázquez

Universidad Panamericana. México

Member of the International Federation of Philosophy Societies (FISP) Steering Committee and Chair of FISP's Committee of Bioethics and the Ethics of the Sciences. She obtained a B.A. in Philosophy from the University Panamericana (Mexico). After postgraduate study supported by a scholarship from the Mexican Council for Science and Research (CONACYT), she obtained a Ph.D. in Philosophy at the University of Genoa (Italy) and undertook research at that University for several years. Her research fields were initially in epistemology, and the study of philosophical and scientific doctrines in pre-Hispanic Mexican cultures. She then became deeply interested in bioethics, in which she obtained a master's degree (at the Ateneo Regina Apostolorum in Rome) and a Doctorate (at the Universidad Anáhuac of México). She had several teaching appointments at universities in Mexico and Italy. She's member of Mexican National Research System (SNI).

Philosophy does not offer tools for solving practical problems but looks for a sense of concrete situations through a rational reflection. In the present case this sense focuses on: 1. human fragility (the virus can kill whoever human being); 2. human impotence (our situation is essentially identical with that of ancient epidemics: our defense reduces to isolation); 3. limited efficiency of technoscience (the decisive therapy for this illness has not been found yet, despite the efforts of hundreds of laboratories and pharmaceutical companies); 4. rediscovery of common good and human solidarity (the protection of the individuals is needed for the protection of society and viceversa); 5. the incumbent presence of death (in whose light the hierarchy of values orienting human existence can be reshaped). The results of this reflections can point out responsibilities of the political power and produce hostility against philosophers and the effort of silencing their voice, reminding us of the example of Socrates

Withdrawing Critical Care from Patients in a Triage Situation

Prof. P. Michael Baggot

Ateneo Pontificio Regina Apostolorum

UNESCO Chair in Bioethics and Human Rights. Italy.

Graduated summa cum laude from Christendom College with a B.A. in Philosophy, before working in Rome as a Resident Director for the school's study abroad program. In 2013, he received a licentiate of philosophy summa cum laude from the Athenaeum Pontificium Regina Apostolorum in Rome. Prior to entering the seminary, Baggot reported on prominent bioethical issues as a writer for the LifeSiteNews organization. He spent his initial period of seminary formation near Cologne, Germany. He later worked as an assistant for the Curso de Hispanidad in Mexico City and as a teacher at Pinecrest Academy in Atlanta, Georgia, before returning to Rome for further studies.

Prof. P. Louis Melahn LC

Ateneo Pontificio Regina Apostolorum

Native of Massachusetts, U.S.A., did his undergraduate studies in biology, with a concentration in biochemistry, at the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Massachusetts. He completed his undergraduate studies in theology at the Pontifical Athenaeum Regina Apostolorum in 2012, and obtained a licentiate in philosophy there in 2014, with a specialization in metaphysics, in 2014. He is currently a doctoral student and Assistant Professor at the School of Bioethics.

The advent of COVID-19 has been the occasion for a renewed interest in the principles governing triage when the number of critically ill patients exceeds the healthcare infrastructure's capacity in a given location. Some scholars advocate that it would be morally acceptable in a crisis to withdraw resources like life support and ICU beds from one patient

in favor of another, if, in the judgment of medical personnel, the other patient has a significantly better prognosis. The paper examines the arguments for and against this approach, especially from the analysis of the Principle of Double Effect. We conclude that it is inadmissible to withdraw life-saving medical interventions from patients who are still benefiting from them, on the sole grounds that other patients might benefit more. Those who are currently using such technology should only interrupt their treatment if, in the judgment of medical personnel and, if at all possible, taking into account the wishes and needs of the patient and his family, the treatment is deemed futile, burdensome, or disproportionate.

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Ethical Criteria Guidelines for Health Emergencies in Mexico and Kenya in the Context of COVID-19 Pandemic

Prof, Marieli de los Ríos

Universidad Anahuac México

UNESCO Chair in Bioethics and Human Rights

Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy at Universidad Iberoamericana in Mexico City. Cum Laude. She also graduated from a Master of Science in Bioethics at Universidad Anáhuac in Mexico City. Cum Laude. She also, holds a Ph. D. in Philosophy at Universidad Iberoamericana. Cum Laude. Her areas of interest are multiculturalism, postmodernism, violence and migration. She has worked at different Universities at Mexico City and she is currently a Professor at Universidad Anáhuac and Universidad Panamericana.

Dr. Lillian Omutoko

University of Nairobi. Kenya

Bachelor of Education; Master and PhD in Education and Administration. Currently pursuing a Master of Global Bioethics. Trained in Responsible Conduct in International Research; Postgraduate Diploma in Health Research Ethics. She is a Senior Lecturer, University of Nairobi; a member of National Bioethics Committee, Kenyatta National Hospital-University of Nairobi Ethics Research Committee, International Association of Ethics Education; Secretary, Bioethics Society of Kenya, Vice Chairperson, Research Ethics Association of Southern Africa.

Dr. Walter Jaoko

University of Nairobi. Kenya

Physician, professor and Director of KAVI-Institute of Clinical Research at University of Nairobi, an extraordinary professor of medicine at Stellenbosch University, South Africa and member of Strathmore University Research Ethics Committee. He holds the degrees of Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery, Masters in Tropical Medicine, and PhD in Medical Microbiology, and a Postgraduate Diploma in Health Research Ethics. He has 186 scientific publications in peer-reviewed journals and is currently running an EDCTP grant on strengthening research ethics in Kenya.

In response to the upcoming bioethical challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic rises to all countries and after confirming that it was becoming an issue in Mexico, the Faculty of Bioethics at Anahuac University worked on elaborating the “Ethical Criteria Guideline for

health emergencies in Mexico in the context of COVID -19 pandemic”.

This guideline consists of four sections: the first concerning the ethical criteria for the application of COVID-19 tests recommending giving priority to healthcare personnel and to high risk populations. The second considering the ethical criteria in Patients’ Selection and Distribution of Health Resources where the most important bioethical topics were the need for informed consent at the beginning of the process of evaluation and the possibility of palliative care for the patient’s whose medical prior condition reduced their possibilities of survival, the need for advanced directives ideally for everyone before becoming sick or at the presentation to the COVID-19 reception area in hospitals, and, finally, the recognition of intrinsic dignity of every person (COVID-19 or not) and, therefore, the prohibition of abandonment of patient or deception of medical attention the same as the prohibition of ventilator withdrawal either for giving it to another patient or without families’ consent. The third section reflects upon other ethical considerations such as Conscientious Objection on the Part of Health Care Providers, Psychological Assistance and Support to Health Care Professionals and Patients and Families, The Right to the Final Farewell, Disposal and Ethical Management of COVID-19 Confirmed Dead Bodies, Ethical Considerations for the Research Processes During Emergencies, and finally the fourth section that has to do with information management with topics such as Privacy and confidentiality: disclosing the identity of the infected people and the duty to truthful and trustworthy Information are discussed.

This guideline was distributed across our country in Mexico but also it reached some parts of the United States, Spain, Italy and Kenia where it has been considered to elaborate ethical criteria according to African reality and context. Kenya’s Ministry of Health response to COVID-19 pandemic involves restriction of movement, quarantine of international travelers and infection contacts in isolation centers. These measures though necessary raise fundamental ethical concerns on human rights, dignity, privacy and confidentiality. Safeguarding these require multidisciplinary whole person-centered approach embracing respect for persons, equality, non-discrimination, transparency, cultural diversity, and right to freedom.

Solicitude and Care for the Whole Human Family Facing the COVID-19 Pandemic

Prof. Fr. Christopher Mahar

Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development. Vatican.

Earned his Ph.D. in Theological Ethics in December 2016 from the Catholic University of Louvain, focusing on brain injury and artificial nutrition and hydration. He taught Moral Theology at Providence College and served on the “Ethics and Patients’ Rights Committee” for Our Lady of Fatima Hospital in Rhode Island until 2017. From September through December 2017 he served at the Holy See’s Permanent Observer Mission to the United Nations in New York, and in April 2018 was appointed to the Dicastery for the Promotion of Integral Human Development at the Vatican.

When addressing the complexities of the COVID-19 crisis, we are seeking solicitude and care for all persons. While it is essential to refer to the whole human family as we face the global pandemic, that phrase has significance to the extent that we understand the meaning of the family itself. Therefore, the context for care is the family as God has formed it. Pope Francis writes, “No one can think that the weakening of the family as the natural society founded on marriage will prove beneficial to society as a whole” (*Amoris Laetitia*, 52). Society learns care from the family. There are many moral agents engaged in the challenges of the global pandemic: the COVID-19 patient and her family; health care workers;

networks of volunteers; governors, public servants and policy makers; and the international community. These actors work in relationship to establish optimal health for all. The care being offered to the sick in this context can be best delivered when it embraces the dignity of every human person as a vital part of the whole human family, seeking always to bring about the common good while respecting the principles of subsidiarity and solidarity with those most vulnerable.

ADD KNOW-ledge to your Decision-Making. Ethical Clinical Decision-Making in Scenarios with Scarce Resources During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Prof. Mariel Kalkash

Universidad Anahuac México

UNESCO Chair in Bioethics and Human Rights

Medical Doctor degree by Universidad Anahuac Mexico. Same university in which she later completed her Masters in Bioethics studies (thesis pendant). During this time, she focused in the area of Neuroethics as her area of interest, for which she founded in 2015 the group Clinical Bioethics and Neuroethics Anahuac (BINCA), together with her mentor and collaborator, Dr. Jose Damian Carrilo Ruiz. Some of the group's products are the 1st Interdisciplinary Neuroethics Diploma course and the compilation and editing of a Neuroethics book in spanish to be published soon. She still coordinates this group remotely while having the opportunity to work in other projects and areas abroad, such as "The Health Stand" (La Ventanilla de Salud) at the Mexican Consulate in Washington D.C. Last year she joined the Neurology Department and the research team at the Center of Sleep and Consciousness at University of Wisconsin-Madison, as a study coordinator, where she continues to grow her research experience under the supervision of Dr. Melanie Boly. Recently Dr. Kalkash became affiliated as a Research Scholar of the UNESCO Chair in Bioethics and Human Rights, working in neuroethics, law and neuromarketing.

We present the context and justification for a practical guide made to accompany healthcare providers in their decision-making during ethical dilemmas in the context of resource scarcity during the COVID-19 pandemic. Although deciding when to apply rationing measures is a matter to be discussed by each medical center and team, it can be argued that scarcity of resources has become the norm during this pandemic. Beyond the material resources, the scarcity scenarios are worsened by the insufficient numbers of human resources with adequate medical, triaging and rationing abilities to respond to the needs. As many of the healthcare professionals responding to the pandemic lack previous training in such skills, difficult decision-making scenarios have become an added burden.

Upon the lack of formal training in triage, rationing and even ethics, or even reflection of these shortcomings, decisions become informed by personal biases. The influence of racial prejudice and other biases has already been observed to affect healthcare professionals' decision-making. Such decisions could be harming vulnerable populations with little access to care, based on racial, nepotistic, and elitist biases.

The guide provides a summary of our workgroup's reflection using four words which are the link to each recommendation: 1) ASK: Is this an ethical problem or not? 2) DO: Try to make a decision based on the probability of recovery or mortality 3) DON'T: Don't assign the value of "social utility" to a patient to decide whether they will receive treatment or not. 4) KNOW: Available resources in your hospital for complex decision-making such as ethics or bioethics advisory services, protocols of consulting among colleagues to avoid personal and clinical management biases, and designating one or several individuals per shift that can be responsible for decision-making in ethically complex cases.

UNESCO Statement on Covid-19: Ethical Considerations from Global Perspective

Dr. Dafna Feinholz Klip
UNESCO

Dafna Feinholz has a PhD in Research Psychology (UIA Mexico) and a Master in Bioethics (Universidad Complutense, Madrid, Spain). She was the Head of the Reproductive Epidemiology Department at the Mexican National Institute of Perinatology, and the Director for Research and Planning of the Women and Health Programme, at the Ministry of Health (Mexico). She successively occupied the posts of Academic Coordinator of the National Commission of Human Genome at the Ministry of Health and Executive Director of the National Commission of Bioethics. Among her achievements, she ensured a more independent legal status for the National Bioethics Committees (NBC); contributed to define their mission as promoters of a bioethics culture; encouraged them to provide society and decision makers with the necessary elements to understand and tackle ethical issues. She drafted the first national guidelines for Research Ethics Committees and Clinical Bioethics Committees; and promoted the law that established and differentiated both types of committees (law approved and currently in vigour). She was Mexico's representative at the Intergovernmental Bioethics Committee who drafted and negotiated the UNESCO's Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights. Since September 2009, Dafna Feinholz is the Chief of the Bioethics and Ethics of Science Section, within UNESCO's Social and Human Science Sector. In this capacity, she leads different activities aiming at reinforcing capacities of Member States to manage bioethical challenges and to identify the ethical, legal and social implications of cutting-edge science, emerging technologies and their application for sustainable development, and promoting awareness raising and public debate.

The COVID-19 coronavirus disease is an acute novel emerging infection that has rapidly reached grave pandemic proportions necessitating a global bioethics reflection and response. The many ethical issues that arise call for putting aside differences and collectively reflecting on ethically acceptable solutions. A bioethics and ethics of science and technology perspective, rooted in human rights, should play a key role in the context of this challenging pandemic.

The IBC and COMEST, as international advisory bodies in the field of bioethics and ethics of science and technology, recognize the urgency to go beyond political frontiers, geographical borders, and cultural differences, in order to focus on our common need and shared responsibility to engage in a dialogue to find measures to overcome the dramatic situation. In such emergencies, the role of bioethics and ethics committees, at national, regional and international levels, is to sustain a constructive dialogue, based on the conviction that political decisions need to be scientifically grounded and ethically inspired and guided.

The IBC and COMEST would like to highlight some vital ethical issues from a global perspective which urgently need to be recognized all over the world, and appeal for urgent actions to be taken by governments.

PRESENTATIONS FROM APRA «ALUMNI»

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Day	Schedule	Name, Title of contribution
3 / 07	17:30	Jairo Andrés Villalba-López, <i>The Social Vulnerability Increased by COVID in Latin America</i>
3 / 07	17:35	Paul Peter Rom, <i>Misuse of the Term Social Distance</i>
3 / 07	17:40	William Gallerizzo, <i>Promoting Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide During COVID-19</i>
3 / 07	17:45	Cecile Rochard-O'Connor, <i>Public Health Bases - Infectious Disease Control</i>
3 / 07	17:50	Margit Spatzenegger, <i>Reflection on Epidemic Disease Prevention</i>
3 / 07	17:55	Victor Joseph Steve Effa Ateba, <i>Africa e COVID-19. Dilemmi etici negli studi clinici</i>

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Day	Schedule	Name, Title of contribution
4 / 07	17:00	Giulio Corgatelli, <i>COVID-19 e medicina di famiglia</i>
4 / 07	17:05	Silvia Cocchiara, <i>COVID-19 e compressione delle libertà costituzionali</i>
4 / 07	17:10	Chinader André, <i>La scienza e la tecnica al servizio della persona umana</i>
4 / 07	17:15	Cosima Maria Rita Piliago, <i>Il COVID-19 nella medicina del territorio</i>
4 / 07	17:20	Giovan Battista De Gattis, <i>La comunicazione generativa in sanità</i>
4 / 07	17:25	Dalila Casu Di Somma, <i>Riflessione etica sui criteri di ammissione ai trattamenti intensivi</i>
4 / 07	17:30	Sara Bonelli, <i>Il COVID-19 nelle RSA</i>
4 / 07	17:35	Maroun Badr, <i>Unzione degli infermi durante il COVID-19: approccio personalista</i>
4 / 07	17:40	Ada Giorno, <i>L'intelligenza artificiale e le azioni consapevoli dell'uomo</i>
4 / 07	17:45	Roberta Gambardella, <i>Homo curans e risorse sanitarie limitate</i>
4 / 07	17:50	Marina Bellia, <i>Sanità: Tutela della vita? Tutela della persona?</i>
4 / 07	17:55	Andrea Mariani, <i>COVID-19: Problema o domanda?</i>

This is a preliminary schedule that could be modified and updated online