



Global Network of
WHO Collaborating Centres for

BIOETHICS



PROGRESS REPORT
2019–2021

Global Network of WHO Collaborating Centres for Bioethics: progress report 2019-2021

ISBN 978-92-4-004729-7 (electronic version)

ISBN 978-92-4-004730-3 (print version)

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report was compiled by Dr Paola Buedo with coordination by Dr Andreas Reis and input and contributions from all the collaborating centres under the guidance of Dr Florencia Luna, the current Chair of the Global Network of WHO collaborating centres for Bioethics.

WHO COLLABORATING CENTRES FOR BIOETHICS

COLLABORATING CENTRE	ACRONYM	REGION	CO-DIRECTOR(S)
Centre for Medical Ethics and Law, Department of Medicine Faculty of Medicine and Health Science Stellenbosch University Tygerberg, South Africa	SU	African Region	Keymanthri Moodley
Programme of Bioethics Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales Buenos Aires, Argentina	FLACSO	Region of the Americas	Florencia Luna
Joint Center for Bioethics University of Toronto Toronto, Canada	JCB	Region of the Americas	Jennifer Gibson
Centro de Bioética, Facultad de Medicina Clínica Alemana Universidad del Desarrollo Santiago de Chile, Chile	UDD	Region of the Americas	Juan Pablo Beca Bernardita Portales
Institute for Bioethics and Health Policy Miller School of Medicine University of Miami Miami (FL), United States of America	UM	Region of the Americas	Kenneth Goodman
Centre of Biomedical Ethics and Culture Sindh Institute of Urology and Transplantation Karachi, Pakistan	CBEC	Eastern Mediterranean Region	Farhat Moazam Aamir Jafarey
Salim El-Hoss Bioethics & Professionalism Program American University of Beirut and Medical Center Beirut, Lebanon	SHBPP	Eastern Mediterranean Region	Thalia Arawi
Medical Ethics and History of Medicine Research Center Tehran University of Medical Sciences Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran	MEHMRC	Eastern Mediterranean Region	Bagher Larijani
Institute of Biomedical Ethics and History of Medicine University of Zurich Zurich, Switzerland	IBME	European Region	Nikola Biller-Andorno

COLLABORATING CENTRE	ACRONYM	REGION	CO-DIRECTOR(S)
ICMR Bioethics Unit, Indian Council of Medical Research National Centre for Disease Informatics and Research Bangalore, India	ICMR	South-East Asia Region	Roli Mathur
Asian Institute of Bioethics and Health Law Department of Medical Law and Ethic Yonsei University Seoul, Republic of Korea	AIBHL	Western Pacific Region	So Yoon Kim
Centre for Biomedical Ethics Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine National University of Singapore Singapore	NUS	Western Pacific Region	Voo Teck Chuan
Centre for Human Bioethics Monash University Melbourne, Australia	MU	Western Pacific Region	Zeb Jamrozik

BACKGROUND

The Global Network of WHO Collaborating Centres for Bioethics (hereafter referred to as “the Network”) was established in 2009 to “support the WHO-HQ Global Health Ethics Unit (Geneva) to implement its mandated work in the field of ethics and health, including:

- articulating ethical and evidence-based policy options (WHO core function);
- advancing ethics- and rights-based approaches to health promoted within WHO and at national and global levels; and
- increasing capacity to assess and act upon ethical issues in public health at country, regional and global levels and within the Organization”.

A revision of the terms of reference of the Network was adopted on 3 December 2021.¹

¹ Global Network of WHO Collaborating Centres for Bioethics. Terms of reference (December 2021). Geneva: World Health Organization; 2021 (<https://www.who.int/groups/global-network-of-who-collaborating-centres-for-bioethics/terms-of-reference>).

During the reporting period (January 2019–December 2021), the members of the Network collaborated multilaterally on a number of major projects initiated by the WHO Health Ethics and Governance unit and WHO regional offices. Recent collaborative projects have focused on public health surveillance, infectious disease outbreaks, vector-borne diseases and digital health. As the reporting period included 2 years of the COVID-19 pandemic, in which the members of the Network were involved in many activities, a section of this report is devoted to COVID-19.

Since the previous report, three new members have been welcomed to the Network, which now comprises 13 WHO collaborating centres in all six WHO regions (Fig. 1).

NETWORK DEVELOPMENTS

NEW CHAIR

Dr Luna (FLACSO) was elected Chair of the Network on 17 May 2020 for a 2-year term, following Dr Vikki Entwistle (NUS).



Fig. 1: Global Network of WHO Collaborating Centres for Bioethics

NEW MEMBERS

During the reporting period, the Network welcomed three new collaborating centres for bioethics as members:

- Medical Ethics and History of Medicine Research Center, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
- Bioethics Unit, Indian Council of Medical Research, National Centre for Disease Informatics and Research, Bangalore, India (the first centre in the WHO South-East Asia Region)
- Salim El-Hoss Bioethics and Professionalism Program, American University of Beirut and Medical Center, Beirut, Lebanon.

There were therefore 13 members of the Network at the end of 2021.

ANNUAL MEETINGS

The 10th Annual Network meeting was organized in Bangalore, India, on 8 December 2018. It coincided with the 14th World Congress of Bioethics of the International Association of Bioethics.

The 11th annual Network meeting took place on 17 May 2020 virtually because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The 12th Annual Network meeting was hosted by Keymanthri Moodley and her team at Stellenbosch University, South Africa, on 3 December 2021 in a hybrid mode. It coincided with the 16th Annual International Conference on Clinical Ethics and Consultation.

ACTIVITIES

COVID-19

Several members of the Network made key contributions to various WHO expert groups on ethics during COVID-19. Dr Upshur (JCB) has been co-chairing the WHO Expert Group on Ethics and COVID-19 since February 2020. Dr Mathur (ICMR), Dr Arawi (SHBPP), Dr Voo (NUS) and Dr Mastroleo (FLACSO) were invited to join the Expert Group.

Vaccination and immunity certificates

As a member of the WHO Smart Vaccination Certificate Consortium and a consultant for the WHO Digital Health and Innovation Department, Dr Voo (NUS) led drafting of a chapter on ethical considerations and data protection principles in the WHO guidance document on Digital documentation of COVID-19 certificates: Test results, and the chapter on Ethical considerations in the WHO document Digital documentation of COVID-19 certificates: Vaccination status: Technical specifications and implementation guidance. Dr Voo (NUS) was also the lead writer of the Working Group's papers on COVID-19 vaccination certificates and lifting public health and social measures: ethical considerations and Immunity certification with COVID-19: ethical considerations. He contributed to the first draft of the ethics section of the WHO Interim position paper: considerations regarding proof of COVID-19 vaccination for international travellers and served in the working group on mandatory vaccination and vaccine passports. Dr Arawi (SHBPP) and Dr Upshur (JCB) contributed to drafting these documents.

Dr Moazam (CBEC) and Dr Beca (UDD) were

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