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Revista Bioética

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General Aspects

The *Revista Bioética* (translated: *Bioethics Magazine*), published regularly by the Federal Council of Medicine (abbreviated as CFM in Brazil - Conselho Federal de Medicina) for 23 years, has contributed significantly up to this day to the training of health professionals in Brazil. Considering ethics to be intrinsic to the best use of techniques, the periodical brings together a broad audience which is not restricted to medical specialties or to other areas of health training, but which extends to all who yearn to discuss the correlation between ethics, health and society .

As the main vehicle of dissemination of bioethics in the country, the *Revista Bioética* promotes a reflection on the subjective aspects of health practices, encouraging awareness - personal and professional - about moral values involved in new technologies. Promoting an understanding about the meaning, impact and consequences of the use of technical and technological resources, the periodical allows to demonstrate the relevance of its use in a specific social conjuncture, as well as its cultural adequacy to this social context.

The careful examination of the articles published in more than two decades demonstrates that the published works reveal how bioethics have been consolidated in our country. As a pioneer vehicle of national academic production, the periodical is - arguably - the compendium of ideas that shaped this study in Brazil. Its historic importance for bioethics, however, in no way diminishes the attribute that constitutes its essence: the emphasis on innovation.

The idea of reflection and discussion on ethical aspects of new techniques and technologies in healthcare marked the proposal that led to the creation of the *Revista Bioética* which was devoted, from the first moment, to enable health professionals to meet those challenges. Thus, already in its first issue, the periodical approached polemic and dilemmatic matters, helping to understand complex issues related to the strong mystification attributed at the time to technological resources, and also to the subsumption of social issues which cause impact, directly or indirectly, on health indicators.

When one follows the Brazilian academic production since the beginning of the study, it is possible to observe that bioethics, at first, were limited essentially to discuss the impact of researches and the introduction of new technologies in clinical practice. It was from this forum for debate, assimilated from the American proposal for the study ^{1,2}, that the Brazilian bioethics reached progressively an autochthonous perspective, which is distinguished by the inclusion in the field of bioethics of reflexions about its social dimension . This process, which largely resulted from the criticism regarding the Brazilian Health Reform ³, was supported by the promulgation of the Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights ⁴, which emphasised reflexions about human dignity in the dynamics of collective action ⁵, reshaping them at local and

global levels, for groups, sections, populations and nations.

This achievement expanded significantly the scope of activity of bioethics, opening the discipline, which until then was limited to the point of view of the professional practice in health, to the dimension of an interdisciplinary field of knowledge production. This new space systematised by the discipline brings together the major fields of knowledge, which confront each other whilst, at the same time, establishing a dialogue between them. Bioethics starts to be characterised - arguably and especially - as an interdisciplinary field⁶ with strong presence in biomedical and humanities areas, but which is already showing signs of presence in the engineering field, especially from an environmental perspective.

Providing the contact between these areas, the *Revista Bioética* stimulates the newly engendered vocation of the field to promote mutual understanding about the interpretation of the reality that each area built on their specific knowledge. The eclectic and extremely refined selection of peer review to analyse each article reinforces this aspect by allowing works to be viewed from the perspective of professionals from diverse areas of training and work, and whose work experience and field of study can contribute to the improvement of the published articles. This gives to the periodical a multifaceted look, able to provide a space of quality for the establishment of an interdisciplinary dialogue field.

To provide means for these new fields of knowledge to emerge from interdisciplinary dialogue guides the editorial line of the *Revista Bioética*. To ensure space for contact and dialogue exchange reaffirms the role of the periodical, which, thanks to its editorial line and collaborators, proves capable of operating on the interface of knowledge production. The *Revista Bioética*, following the conceptual history of the discipline in Brazil and worldwide, stopped being just a "bridge"², which allows only a restricted exchange, to set itself up as an *isthmus*, that is, a strip of land which, although narrow, allows to establish the field for the circulation of knowledge from each area.

The Field and the *Revista Bioética*

The expansion of the bioethics field⁶⁻¹⁵ brings to light the dynamics of power relations of representations underlying the knowledge^{9,16,17}. Adding value to the phenomena, organising hierarchically the values and articulate the moral discourse around the analysis of these phenomena, bioethics emphasises the ambiguity of knowledge production: on the one hand, the discourse of each area reports the technical knowledge produced internally by the use of the area's particular tools and, on the other hand, expresses the specificity of the ethos of the area itself, when it projects its character on to the methods and techniques used to produce the knowledge^{9,16,17}. This process reflects - just - the vision that guides the editorial policy of the *Revista Bioética*: To foster a multidisciplinary and pluralistic discussion¹⁸ in order to produce knowledge adapted to the professional reality and, above all, the socio-cultural reality.

Contrary to what was expected at the time when the change in the scope of action of bioethics was substantiated, the incorporation of the social dimension did not restrict the traditional markers of clinical bioethics but, on the contrary, strengthened them by fostering further this line of reflexion. By stimulating the

questioning about the founding axiom of the field – the principlism - the process allowed to relativise the determinism attributed to these marks ¹⁹, besides allowing the questioning and improvement of these tools, incorporating other theoretical bases, such as those emanated from human rights and other deliberative models in health care ^{20,21}.

Principlism became more coherent and focused through exhaustive analysis^{3,5,6,10-12,14,22-24}, no longer being an univocal interpretation of all phenomena related to the health field and recovering its basic guiding role to evaluate the ethics of the processes related to professional practices in health, in the clinical and research fields. In discussing this process and encouraging the bioethical reflexion engendered in the last decades, the periodical gives visibility to processes and themes unrelated to the clinical practice, enabling the understanding of the interdependence between healthcare and society.

Born from the dissatisfaction with principlism's responses and the paternalistic limits of deontology, the social bioethics - Brazilian and Latin American - have been contributing to the unprecedented development of this field. Upon careful analyses of healthcare processes and systems, this set of theoretical and analytical proposals considers inequalities in access to treatment as another by-product of the social conditions of each context, emphasising the close relationship between poverty and illness, as other areas of knowledge do, but also elaborating a vigorous ethical analysis, able to point out the morals that endorse such asymmetries and the powers involved in this hierarchical relationship.

The *Revista Bioética* has been consolidating itself as the most significant vehicle in the field in the country, able to climb the path of the highest academic and professional recognition, because it presents and promotes the different theoretical aspects of bioethics and inserts its arguments in focused discussions about Brazilian problems.

Current characteristics of the *Revista Bioética* and its editorial process

Fulfilling rigorously a quarterly calendar (April-August -December), the *Revista Bioética* has been publishing annually, since the first 2013 issue, 60 articles per volume, presenting in the seven issues of this period 140 unpublished works, of which 81 are research works (57.86%) and 59 are updates (42.14%). Of this total, 14.3% correspond to articles by foreign authors or co-authors from institutions in Latin America (Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Cuba), Spain and Portugal.

The works produced in Brazil have various origins, most frequent the ones from educational institutions, but also present, sporadically, articles produced in the sphere of ethics review committees, hospital committees and other institutions from all regions of Brazil. Articles from Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo, Brasilia, Minas Gerais, Rio Grande do Sul, Bahia, Pernambuco and Santa Catarina stand out for their frequency. It is worth mentioning, however, that the magazine has been receiving, in a smaller amount, works from Parana, Rio Grande do Norte, Paraiba, Espírito Santo and Pará.

It is important to highlight that each one of these states is represented by different institutions and programs, from the capital city and the interior of the state, which extend from undergraduate courses in

medicine, nursing, physical education, dentistry, to masters in public health, health sciences and, mainly, in bioethics. This heterogeneous group of regions in Brazil, institutions and levels of academic education represented in the published articles shows the acceptance and penetration of the periodical, as well as its key role in instigating reflexion about ethics in healthcare in our country.

In this regard, a hallmark of the *Revista Bioética* should be noted, which is related to the academic degree of authors and co authors of the articles. While much of the published works count with the presence of at least one doctor, many articles include academics in training: undergraduate, masters and doctoral students. Far from expressing failure or a decrease in the selection criteria, this strategy is intended - to the contrary - to encourage the teaching of ethics through reflexion and discussion on all levels of professional training .

Therefore, to publish these works, when accepted at all stages of peer review using the same rigour as applied to other works, meets the courageous commitment of the periodical to professional training in applied ethics. Contrary to the rigid dictates that subliminally induce the editorial rules for scientific publications, which give higher quality to journals that circumscribe the publication only to authors with titles at the top of the academic hierarchy, the *Revista Bioética* edits, side by side, works from professors, post-doctors, doctors, masters, specialists, graduates and even undergraduates. Devised by groups of different compositions, such articles reflect the free thinking of their authors or the results of the learning process in a discipline, besides expressing findings from orientation projects in post graduation courses or works developed by research groups, which report a dialogue inherent and essential to the production of knowledge.

Editorial board and *ad hoc* reviewers

The *Revista Bioética* editorial board currently consists of 42 members - recognised national and international experts in their fields, including many who deal with interface issues in bioethics (Table 2 below). Coming from different countries and different training areas , the board of the periodical is formed by doctors of various specialties, nurses, philosophers, biologists, dentists, anthropologists, lawyers, jurists, economists and veterinarians, many of them also being professors whose affiliation is indicated in the opening pages of each printed copy as well as in the online version ²⁵.

Six of its members are foreign representatives from Latin American countries as well as Spain and Portugal. The Brazilian members belong to health care, educational and research institutions from five out of the six regions of the country. It is up to the editorial board to evaluate all papers submitted for publication, as well as to collaborate with the analysis of the strategies adopted to foster the editorial policy for dissemination of bioethics.

In addition to the members of the editorial board, the *Revista Bioética* also counts an impressive list of *ad hoc* reviewers willing to contribute to the evaluation of the works (Annex I). This list , always published in the third issue of each annual volume had, at the end of 2014, 266 referee names from all areas of knowledge that interface with bioethics. It should be noted that the number of collaborators has been increasing

constantly, as other professionals have accepted the editorial invitation to review articles from their training areas.

Indexing

The *Revista Bioética* is currently listed at 10 databases, due to its strict compliance with the classification requirements of articles, together with the editorial process of work submission, standardisation and periodicity:

- Literatura Latino-Americana e do Caribe em Ciências da Saúde (Lilacs);
- Latindex;
- Periódica – Índice de Revistas Latinoamericanas en Ciencias;
- Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ);
- Sumários de Revistas Brasileiras;
- Scientific Eletronic Library Online (SciELO);
- EBSCOhost Online Research Databases;
- Directory of Research Journal Indexing (DRJI);
- ReadCube;
- Red de Revistas Científicas de América Latina y el Caribe, España y Portugal (Redalyc).

It should be noted that the periodical is affiliated to the Brazilian Association of Science Editors (abbreviated as ABEC in Brazil - Associação Brasileira de Editores Científicos).

Currently, the link to the *Revista Bioética* in Portuguese is published on the Portal of Magazines of the Virtual Library on public health in Brazil (abbreviated as BVS in Brazil- Biblioteca Virtual em Saúde Pública Brasil), on the SciELO page, on the Portal of Periodical of the CAPES, besides the institutional website of the CFM, where the magazine is also presented in English and Spanish. It is expected that the *Revista Bioética* online will also be publicised in English and Spanish by SciELO, as well as by Redalyc in the first half of 2015.

Print publication and online publication

The 10,000 printed copies are intended, preferably, for professional and civic training, shipped free of charge to all registered recipients. They are 2,187 libraries from higher education institutions registered with the Ministry of Education (abbreviated as MEC in Brazil- Ministerio da Educacao), in addition to another 259 institutional libraries. Approximately 1,260 students from bioethics and medical ethics disciplines, both in undergraduate and post graduate courses in bioethics from the various Brazilian institutions, today receive the *Revista Bioética*, distributed by their lecturers.

In addition to these deliveries, focused directly on the teaching of bioethics in the undergraduate and post graduate levels, the periodical is also sent to 172 medical schools; 288 committees of ethics on research,

which are registered at the National Commission of Research on Ethics (abbreviated as Conep in Brazil- Comissão Nacional de Ética em Pesquisa) and 1,619 medical ethics committees; 203 research groups registered in the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (abbreviated as CNPq in Brazil- Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico) who work with "ethics," "bioethics" and "human rights"; 191 medical stations; about 300 compliant members of the Brazilian Society of Bioethics (abbreviated as SBB in Brazil- Sociedade Brasileira de Bioética), among others.

In order to consolidate the interface with the field of law, the printed magazines are also sent to the Ministério Público dos Estados, Ministério Público Federal and the Procuradorias da República (The three institutions listed are part of the Judiciary of Brazil and relate to prosecution services) - in the municipalities and the states - in addition to the ministers of the Supreme Federal Court. Also making up the recipient list of printed fascicles are the Public Defense Services and 59 nucleus of legal practices of law courses registered in the MEC (abbreviation for Ministry of Education in Brazil) .

The online page of the *Revista Bioética*, available in the Medical Portal of the CFM, allows free access to the entire content of the articles and, since 2010, brings the integral English version of each issue published. From 2014, the complete translation of articles in Spanish also started to be published, in order to increase the journal's visibility in Latin America. In 2015, versions in English and Spanish will be available not only on the CFM website, but also on other databases in which the journal is indexed, which will encourage further dissemination of the works.

The *Revista Bioética* is also available in app for tablet and mobile phone (on itunes and Android), whose link is sent by direct mail to: 250,000 physicians; the federal advisers; medical regional councils, and other areas that interface with bioethics; societies and medical schools, and members of the Red Latinoamericana y el Caribe de Bioética of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). In the first half of 2015 all the authors who have published papers in the journal will be added to the recipient list of the electronic edition, as well as ad hoc reviewers who collaborated in the examination of the articles.

However, it is important to consider that, although the publication of the electronic version of periodicals in general has been growing worldwide whilst the proportion of printed versions decreases, the printing on paper is still needed, especially because it is an efficient way to make the magazine really known. The printed version of the *Revista Bioética* makes its existence tangible because the fascicle goes to the reader. If published only in electronic form, it will be read only by those who actively search for it on the Internet, what, paradoxically, will reduce its reach, at least at this point. Therefore, the maintenance of the printed edition is still strategic to disseminate the periodical, whose editorial policy is grounded in the dissemination of bioethics.

Editorial process

With regard to the editorial process itself, in this course of more than two decades, the periodical has been improving the processing of articles, as it is currently required by the indexing institutions. Each work

received undergoes a detailed editorial review process before being assigned to the examination of reviewers. As soon as it has been received, each manuscript is recorded in an editorial accompanying table, which defines, among other things, the work title, its characterisation (research or update), authorship and the date of submission.

In addition to the basic process of identification at this early stage of the editorial proceeding, the manuscripts are checked for compliance with the formatting requirements (text and summary's size, presentation or not of titles and translated abstracts, name, e-mail, professional affiliation of the author, origin etc.). Works will also undergo a check on a plagiarism detection program in order to identify unauthorised copies or possible faults in the indication of references in the body of the text or at its end. Still in 2015, the adoption of other programs to detect plagiarism are being studied with the purpose of improving the process. If any of these requirements are not adequately met, the work returns to the authors for the necessary adjustments and complementation.

After this initial step, the manuscript is sent to a pre edition, realised by the scientific publishing house, which seeks to improve the work, requesting from the authors adjustments and necessary additions, both in content and in form, in the text and references. Moreover, the keywords are checked in the list of Descriptors in Health Sciences (abbreviated as DeCS in Brazil- Descritores em Ciências da Saúde) and terms are suggested if the terms indicated by the authors are not in that data bank. This editorial process which precedes the peer review is intended to qualify the subsequent analysis of the reviewers, who, upon being relieved from these tasks, can focus their attention on the content of the work. The reading and pre editing are also indispensable in the selection of the most appropriate evaluators to the theme of each manuscript.

In the evaluation of the works, we adopt the double-blind system, a method based on the recognition of the importance that each article be examined by three reviewers able to understand and respond to the complexity of the issues discussed. Given the interdisciplinary nature that bioethics are acquiring, most of the work needs to be examined by experts from different fields. Thus, it is considered appropriate to send each work to professionals with training in areas pertaining to the theme of the manuscript, to those who study the same subject, and also to specialists on bioethics, who are able to evaluate the content on its general aspect. To the greatest extent, we seek to avoid that the same reviewer assess more than one article in each issue of the periodical.

It is important to highlight that papers are only published if they are accepted in at least two of these assessments and that all the requirements of the reviewers are taken into consideration and forwarded to the authors, even in works already accepted in two assessments. Just as one does with each of the versions of the manuscripts (original version, edited, adjusted by the author, revised after review etc.), all reports are filed and the authors receive the consolidated and anonymous version with suggestions and demands of evaluators so the authors can make the necessary corrections and adjustments.

If the evaluation requires a re-examination of the reviewer ("reassess after modifications"), those additional considerations are also archived. The date in which the editors receive the last of the two reviews of acceptance of the work, which will be consolidated in the report sent to the authors, is indicated at the end of

the work by the word "revised" . Similarly, the date on which the manuscript is returned by the authors with the requested changes and is accepted definitely for publication by the editors is indicated by the word "approved" in the same box reproduced at the end of the articles, also the submission date of the work by the authors, indicated by the term "received".

The editorial guidelines, published in Portuguese at the end of the printed fascicles and also in the online version in other languages (English and Spanish) , detail the presentation criteria of manuscripts relating to content, format and normatisation in the detailed information of the editorial proceeding 26-28. The works are published only with the written consent of all authors. The author designated as responsible or principal shall send this document via email as well as by post. Authors should also submit declaration related to conflict of interest, which will be published in a brief way in the footer on the first page of the article. If the work had been submitted for consideration by the committee of ethics in research, then the document or review number should be equally informed.

It also contributes to the proper completion of each issue the work of the CFM's librarians who review the references of each article to ensure its reliability. The management team of the CFM (Federal Council of Medicine- Conselho Federal de Medicina), the legal, financial and information technology sectors, and the institutional press sector, in charge of disseminating the issues published online also cooperate indirectly with the production of the periodical. Besides them, five companies contracted to carry out the copyediting tasks and review of the text in Portuguese, translation and revision of English and Spanish, layout, conversion to XML format and print also collaborate with the periodical ²⁹.

Final considerations

This brief presentation of the characteristics and work processes of the *Revista Bioética* allows the interested reader and researcher to understand the dynamics established in the periodical, which seeks to meet all requirements of quality of international sources for indexing as well as the classification criteria from government institutions, charged to encourage and foster the teaching and research in the country, such as the Coordination of Higher Education Personnel Training (abbreviated as CAPES-MEC in Brazil - Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior) and the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (abbreviated as CNPq / MCTI in Brazil-Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico).

Pari passu to the efforts to achieve this continuous process of qualification of the *Revista Bioética*, editors, editorial staff, technical staff and ad hoc reviewers who collaborate with the periodical express their determination to reflect and discuss under the academic and scientific perspective the burning issues affecting the Brazilian and Latin American society, regarding the subject of health, taken in a wide sense, looking thus to respond to the yearning for understanding these issues, which also affect, directly, institutions, researchers, lecturers and students who need to consolidate the ethical parameters of their training.

Aware of the commitment made more than two decades ago by the Federal Council of Medicine (CFM-

Conselho Federal de Medicina), we have engaged our efforts for the success of the proposal, inviting everyone to know, enjoy and collaborate with the *Revista Bioética*, with the purpose of together building a more just and equitable society for all.

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