



# Bioethics Education in Pakistan: *An Overview*

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# Outline

- The beginnings: 1980's
- Pakistan Medical and Dental Council
- Pakistan Medical Research Council
- Capacity building efforts
  - Individual
  - Institutional
    - Private sector
    - Public sector
  - Now: the 2000's
  - Future needs

# The beginnings: 1980's

- Mid 1980's
- The first seeds
- Primarily in Karachi
- Limited to “elitist” circles
- Led by and limited to physicians

# Pakistan Medical and Dental Council

- PMDC Code of Ethics
  - All medical and dental colleges running MBBS and BDS Courses, College of Physician and Surgeons of Pakistan and Universities running the Postgraduate Medical Courses in Pakistan are advised to incorporate medical ethics into their curriculum.
- Capacity to carry out directive?

# Pakistan Medical Research Council

- National Bioethics Committee
  - Created by Ministry of Health
  - Managed by PMRC
- Policy making body
- Educational initiatives

# Capacity Building Efforts

- Individual
  - Bioethics education abroad
    - Non NIH programs – USA, Europe
    - NIH programs – USA, Canada, Australia

# Capacity Building Efforts

- Institutional: Private sector and Public sector initiatives
  - Workshops /Conferences/Seminars
  - Primarily on Research Ethics

# Capacity Building Efforts

- Institutional: Private Sector
- Aga Khan University
  - Capacity building in Research Ethics started in 2007 for 2 years, in collaboration with Johns Hopkins University and Higher Education Commission, National Academy of Sciences, USA and USAID
  - Masters in Bioethics starting 2008, funded by US NIH, to train 20 candidates per year for 4 years

# Capacity Building Efforts

- Institutional: Public Sector
- Centre of Biomedical Ethics and Culture
  - Inaugurated in 2004
  - First bioethics centre in the country
  - Multipronged educational strategy
  - Workshops and conferences
  - Postgraduate Diploma in Biomedical Ethics

# Postgraduate Diploma in Biomedical Ethics

- One year, part time program
- Modular
- Contact sessions and distance learning components
- Completing two cycles this December
- Graduates from all over the country



# Evidence of spread

- Workshops at new locations
- Introduction in curriculum
  - Medical students
  - Postgraduates
  - Medical technologists
- Bioethics sessions for high school students

# PAKISTAN



# Private vs. Public Sector Programs

- Faculty: Shared
- Syllabus: Similar
- Structure: Similar
- Applicant Pool: Similar
- Funding Source: *Different* –
  - Private: dependent entirely on external funding
  - Public: dependent on indigenous funding

# Now: 2000's

- Who's involved?
  - Physicians
  - Nurses
  - Philosophers
  - *Ulema* (religious scholars)

# Future needs

- Sporadic capacity development efforts have been underway for a while
- Sustained, broad based programs
- Support for graduates
- Self reliance and independence
- Regional collaboration

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