

Editorial

Bioethics – should they encourage the killing of unwanted newborn infants?

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In medicine and surgery, traditional medical ethics have been based on the Oath of Hippocrates that has endured through the centuries because its precepts are patient-oriented, namely that the first consideration of the physician is the need of the individual patient. Doctors are sworn to do no harm and to advise and do what is in the best interest of their patients; third-party payers, insurers, society, and the state are (or should be) secondary considerations.

For several decades, progressive academicians have been pushing for a new term, that is, bioethics.^[3] And even more recently, a newer term, tailor-made for the neurosciences and neurosurgical specialties, has come into vogue, that is, neuroethics.^[2]

Bioethics (and potentially neuroethics) is based on utilitarianism and collectivist, population-based ethics that are susceptible to manipulation by social engineers, and the influence of government monetary and funding considerations.^[1-4] Bioethics and the veterinary ethic are applicable to humane animal research and when treating sick and injured animals – in which the veterinarian does not act necessarily in the best interest of the injured animal, but according to the wishes of the animal's owner, the person responsible for paying the bill – but not sick human patients.^[2-4]

Bioethics is not concerned with individual autonomy, natural law, moral principles, or the dignity of human life, as it claims. Instead, its tenets are based on situational ethics, moral relativism, utilitarianism, and what is in the best interest of society or more apropos, the state. Attorney and moral philosopher Wesley Smith has called the bioethics movement “a culture of death” because it supports euthanasia of the elderly and infirm; abortion on demand; physician-assisted suicide; the withholding of food and water for terminally or chronically ill patients, etc.^[8] Pope Benedict XVI decried the movement and

reaffirmed the tenets of beneficence, nonmaleficence, natural law, and the sanctity of human life.^[9]

As far as the reach of the bioethics movement, I thought I had heard it all with the call for a limit to human life by age 75^[4] and the concept of the “duty to die.”^[3,8] But I was wrong. The most recent call by some of its members is for infanticide, the horrendous killing of healthy newborn infants, with or without congenital anomalies or defects, as inconvenient superfluities to be discarded like unwanted trash. And the article has been so popular with bioethicists that it has been published and republished with ghastly élan by various biomedical journals, including the *Journal of Medical Ethics* and the prestigious *British Medical Journal*.^[7]

In the landmark article, “After-birth abortion: Why should the baby live?” – the authors Alberto Giubilini and Francesca Minerva, writing from their respective Centres for Applied Philosophy and Public Ethics at two respected

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