A John F. Anderson Memorial Lecture

ON “DOING” BIOETHICS:
THE DIFFERENCE CULTURE AND CIRCUMSTANCE MAKE

Farhat Moazam MD FACS PhD
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Marcia Day Childress PhD, moderator

Human disease in its biological manifestations and treatment modalities is universal in nature. But what constitutes the “right” or ethical thing to do in the practice of medicine is particular, inevitably shaped by existing values and beliefs, socioeconomic realities, and available healthcare circumstances. In this Medical Center Hour, surgeon and ethicist Dr. Farhat Moazam illustrates the challenges of “doing” bioethics in clinical practice by sharing her experiences as a physician in Pakistan.

Suggested resources:

Farhat Moazam MD FACS PhD is a U.S.-trained and board-certified pediatric surgeon with an MA in bioethics and a PhD in religious studies from UVA. Her dissertation was published as Bioethics and Organ Transplantation in a Muslim Society: A Study in Culture, Ethnography, and Religion (Indiana University Press, 2006). Her current focus is research and education pertaining to medical ethics with an interest in cross-cultural bioethics. Dr. Moazam is professor and founding chairperson of the Centre of Biomedical Ethics and Culture (CBEC), Sindh Institute of Urology and Transplantation in Karachi, Pakistan. CBEC was inaugurated in October 2004, and was recently designated a WHO Collaborative Centre for Bioethics for the Eastern Mediterranean Region. In the past, Dr. Moazam was professor and founding chairperson of the Department of Surgery (1985-1995) and the first associate dean of postgraduate medical education (1995-2000) at the Aga Khan University (AKU) in Karachi. Dr. Moazam is a fellow of UVA’s Institute for
Practical Ethics and Public Life, a faculty affiliate of UVA’s Center for Health Humanities and Ethics, and an international fellow of The Hastings Center, Garrison NY. She received an honorary doctorate from the University of Zurich, Switzerland, in 2012 in recognition of her “fundamental contributions towards ethics and organ transplantation in Pakistan.” In 2014, she was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award at the Fifth National Bioethics Conference in Bangalore, India, for her efforts in bioethics education and the support of ethical organ transplantation programs. She has served on the board of directors of the International Association of Bioethics (2009-2014), and has collaborated with WHO on several projects, including updating international guidelines for ethical organ/tissue transplantation, and as a member of WHO’s Ebola Ethics Working Group that formulated ethical guidelines for health professionals managing global epidemics. She serves now on WHO’s Transplantation of Human Organs and Tissues Task Force (DTTF). She is a member of the National Bioethics Committee of Pakistan and chairs its section on healthcare ethics. Dr. Moazam is author of articles on pediatric surgery, medical education, and bioethics in leading international journals, including The Cambridge Quarterly of Healthcare Ethics, Journal of Clinical Ethics, Hastings Center Report, Asian Bioethics Review, Journal of Middle Eastern and South Asian Studies, Bioethics, and The Journal of Medical Health and Philosophy. She has been an invited speaker at national and international forums such as the Pakistan Medical Association, International Association of Bioethics, Islamic Organization of Medical Sciences, Asian Bioethics Association, Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilizations, AKU, London, University of Pennsylvania (Fifth Annual Renée C. Fox Lecture), and the National University of Singapore.

Dr. Moazam declared no personal/professional relationships with commercial entities producing healthcare goods and/or services. Medical Center Hour planning group members M.D. Childress PhD; R.J. Bonnie LLB; R. Carpenter DNP; J.F. Childress PhD; M.F. Marshall PhD; J. Mutter MD MA; K. Reid PhD RN FNP-CN; L. Shepherd JD have no personal/professional relationships with commercial entities producing healthcare goods and/or services, while R. Dillingham MD MPH reports interests with Gilead and Warm Health Technology Inc. UVA Office of Continuing Medical Education faculty and staff have no personal/professional financial relationships with commercial entities producing healthcare goods and/or services.

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Learning objectives for this program:
1. Examine a clinical case that illustrates how culture and context inflected physicians’ and a family’s efforts to reach the “right” ethical decisions for a patient/family member.
2. Reflect on the challenges of “doing” clinical bioethics when culture and circumstance—of patients and families, health professionals, and healthcare systems—have real impact.