

CLINICAL ETHICS BULLETIN

NEWS AND PUBLICATIONS
FROM AROUND THE WORLD
CURATED BY CBME

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NEWS & ARTICLES

Public consultation on proposed laws to better protect genetic information in Singapore

By Zhaki Abdullah // The Straits Times

Singapore is consulting the public on proposed laws to protect genetic information, aiming to stop insurers and employers from requiring genetic tests or using genetic results in insurance and employment decisions. MOH says stronger safeguards are needed so people feel confident taking genetic tests that could help prevent or manage inherited health risks, especially as national testing programmes expand.

Doctor accused of causing patient's death by cutting wrong arteries restricted from surgery for 18 months

By Lydia Lam // Channel News Asia

A Singapore doctor has been barred from most surgeries for 18 months after being charged with causing a patient's death by cutting the wrong arteries during routine kidney surgery. The Singapore Medical Council said the doctor's error pointed to his fundamental misunderstanding of human anatomy, noting he still misidentified key structures at a coroner's inquiry three years later; the doctor has voluntarily stopped performing major abdominal surgery since 2022.

'Routine' medical treatments are not risk free. Patients should ask questions before consenting"

By Ranjana Srivastava // Guardian

Routine medical treatments can still carry real risks, so patients should not equate "common" with "harmless" and should ask why an intervention is needed, what alternatives exist, and what happens if they decline it. The article argues that unnecessary tests, antibiotics, IVs, and procedures can harm individuals and also drain limited healthcare resources from patients who truly need care.

Nicotine vapes best chance to quit smoking, major review finds

By Michelle Roberts // BBC

A major Cochrane review of 80 trials found that regulated nicotine vapes give smokers the best chance of quitting, outperforming patches, gum, support plans, and non-nicotine vapes. Experts stress that vaping is far safer than smoking but not risk-free, with unknown long-term effects and strong warnings that children and non-smokers should never vape.

PUBLICATIONS

Challenging Face-to-Face Communication in Clinical Ethics: Autism as an Illustrative Case

By Junguo Zhang // The American Journal of Bioethics

The article argues that face-to-face communication should not automatically be treated as the ethical "gold standard" in clinical care, because for some autistic patients its immediacy, sensory richness, and unpredictability can create overload, distress, and reduced autonomy. It proposes a more flexible, patient-centred approach in which digital or written communication may sometimes better support autonomy, non-maleficence, and relational care than physical co-presence.

Should All Living Donors Receive Equal Priority in Organ Allocation? An Equality of Opportunity Perspective

By Richard C. Armitage // Journal of Bioethical Inquiry

The article asks whether all living organ donors should receive the same future transplant priority, distinguishing four donation types by motivation and whether the recipient is specified. Using equality of opportunity, it concludes that altruistic non-directed donors may deserve slightly greater recognition, but any extra priority should be modest because donor choices are shaped by circumstance, awareness, media exposure, personal ties, and psychological benefits.

How Useful are Ethical Theories for Students? A Sceptical View

By Matthias Holweger // Ethical Theory and Moral Practice

The article argues that asking students to apply ethical theories to practical issues often does not significantly improve the justification of their moral judgements, because students may cherry-pick theories to support prior views and may not understand the theories well enough to apply them reliably. It suggests ethics teaching should either fix these problems, accept a more modest role for theory application, or shift toward teaching robust ethical insights and argumentation skills instead.

Resident-to-resident Aggression in Long-term Aged Care and Beneficence-based Justification for Psychotropic Use

By Hojjat Soofi // Neuroethics

The paper argues that using psychotropic medication for resident-to-resident aggression in aged care can only be justified on beneficence grounds when the intended benefits to the medicated resident are evidence-based and proportionate to the risks, with foreseeable benefits unable to carry the whole justification. When beneficence is insufficient, institutional harm-prevention may still justify intervention, but it must include safeguards such as compensating the resident for welfare losses caused by the medication's risks.

Mother Earth: Climate Justice, Infant Feeding Decisions, and Intimacy

By Fiona Woollard // Journal of Applied Philosophy

The article argues that although formula feeding has a higher climate impact than nursing, this does not create a moral duty for parents to nurse because nursing involves prolonged, frequent, deeply intimate bodily interaction and significant bodily autonomy concerns. Woollard concludes that climate considerations may give parents reasons to nurse or express milk, and may support better institutional protection for those choices, but they should not be used to blame parents or require them to justify using formula.

BLOG POSTS

Are We Ready to Treat a World on Fire? Climate Literacy in Medical Education

By Benjamin Persons // Hastings Bioethics Forum

The essay argues that climate change is already shaping patient health through wildfire smoke, heat, pollutants, and other environmental exposures, yet U.S. medical education still does not adequately train future physicians to recognize and respond to these risks. Persons frames this as an ethical problem of beneficence, nonmaleficence, and justice, calling for environmental health literacy to be integrated into medical curricula through cases, environmental history-taking, and climate-health electives.

The other dead-donor debate is already here

By Deyaan Guha // JME Forum

The post argues that while public debate focuses on hypothetical "death via organ donation," a real dead-donor conflict already exists when tissue recovery after sudden or suspicious deaths may interfere with medical examiner investigations. Guha proposes "dual stewardship," where donation teams and medical examiners cooperate to honour both anatomical gifts and forensic truth, with transparent limits, evidence-preserving methods, and recusal when conflicts of interest arise.

Should patients have a say in the authorisation of animal experiments?

By David Azilagbetor // JME Forum

The post argues that because animal experiments are often justified by expected patient benefits, patients and carers should be considered for a role in ethical review rather than being spoken about from outside the process. The study found broad but uneven support for patient involvement, while stressing that participation must be meaningful, clearly defined, representative, and sensitive to concerns about expertise, emotional burden, and diverse patient views on animal research.

Spontaneous surgical innovations

By Isabella Grace Carnovale // JME Forum

The post introduces "spontaneous surgical innovation": unplanned intraoperative innovation used when something unexpected happens and no standard solution exists. The author argues that these cases raise distinct ethical issues around consent, liability, accountability, permissibility, possible obligations to innovate, and duties to share any knowledge gained with the wider surgical community.

VIDEOS & PODCAST

Genomic Newborn Screening: Where less really is sometimes more with Ainsley Newson

By Hosts: Julian Savulescu, James Edgar Lim and Sinead Prince // CBmE & U Podcast

Professor Ainsley Newson (University of Sydney) explores the ethical challenges of genomic newborn screening, examining the benefits of early detection, the potential harms of knowing too much too soon, and the role of solidarity in shaping future screening programmes.

UPCOMING EVENTS

The Ethics Edge: Insightful Learning for Today's Doctors

Register Now!

Mode: Online, NUS Learning Management System

"Ethical Expertise: Can you Develop it?" By Prof Peter Singer

Register Now!

Venue: Shaw Foundation Alumni House, Singapore

Date: 9 September 2026

Time: 12:00 - 1:00pm (SGT)

Neuroethics Asia Conference 2026

Register Now!

Venue: NUSS Kent Ridge Guild House, Singapore

Date: 6 - 7 November 2026

Australasian Association of Bioethics and Health Law

Register Now!

Venue: Boorloo/Perth, Western Australia

Date: 29 November 2026 - 2 December 2026

CENTRES Clinical Ethics Conference 2027

[Registration is closed—we're delighted to be at full capacity!]

Venue: Shaw Foundation Alumni House, Singapore

Date: 28 - 29 January 2027

Singapore Research Ethics Conference 2027

Save the date!

Venue: One Farrer Hotel, Singapore

Date: 23 - 24 March 2027