

Contributions to Bioethics in the university education of graduates of Health Science focused on Community Health

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Abstract. Currently, the “humanization of medicine and dentistry” is a priority. It aims at making the patient the center of every action in Health Science. That is why professional Human Health fields feel the need to include a bioethical perspective to pedagogical and field approaches. The university education of these health professionals should then review the ways in which ethical teaching is promoted. In this context, the university curriculum is challenged with rethinking the processes that lead to a graduate who possesses the ethical and bioethical skills needed to solve the different issues that arise in their professional practice. For this reason, this paper tried to describe the contents, ethical skills and methodologies proposed for university learning in Health Sciences.

Key Words: Ethics, Medical education, Community Health

1 Introduction

Currently, the ethical-clinical dilemmas seen in the practice of health careers are many and varied; some of them are related to the way professional praxis is perceived. This proposal aims at: examining the contents, bioethical skills and methodologies identified in the university curriculum of Health Courses that are related to the ethical training of university students and that prepare them for their daily praxis.

2 Theoretical Background

Bioethics teaching at university strengthens the humanization of life and health sciences if professionals learn about respect for life from conception until natural death; respect for the patient’s dignity and rights; the search for the patient’s and their family’s well-being as a whole; the fostering of human skills and attitudes, such as comprehension, compassion, care, coping with pain and death, responsible attitudes,

solidarity (Sgreccia 2009; 107). In this sense, León Correa, (2008:2) pointed out that it is a recent discipline and that it is seen as adopting an interdisciplinary stand.

The insertion of Bioethics to undergraduate curricula for health sciences can contribute to training a professional that has a comprehensive view of the person and the sciences. Incorporating these contents as well as these bioethical values and principles to the practice of medicine will improve the care to be centered on the patient's comprehensive well-being (Outomuro 2008: 22).

Múnera (2011: 2) highlighted the role of Bioethics in interdisciplinary teams to deal with dilemmas that arise from the flow of scientific knowledge. Therefore, the inclusion of ethics should be gradual, in content and in learning times, in a way that it moves along with the students during the courses for the whole curriculum, being taught in the first semesters, as a basis, and in the last ones, as support for the students' clinical practice.

3 Method

This paper aimed at contributing to the university education of health professionals as regards bioethics training. Therefore, ethical contents for two Health Courses curricula were examined.

An observational, documentary, and descriptive research was implemented. The novelty of the research was the analysis of the curriculum designs for Medicine and Dentistry. The methodological strategies used were also analyzed.

4 Results

The proposals for different courses were analyzed:

Table 1 : Course distribution according to Course of Studies

	Medicine	Dentistry
1st Year	Philosophical Anthropology	Anthropology 1
2nd Year	Theological Anthropology	Anthropology 2
3rd Year	Basic and Social Ethics	Basic and Social Ethics
4th Year	Bioethics	Bioethics
5thYear	Medical Anthropology	Anthropology 3

From this analysis, the inclusion of a humanistic perspective was evident for both curriculum designs throughout the Courses. The educational spaces have a place in every year for both Courses and they contribute to gradually training the future health professionals. Moreover, the contents are related to a main axis for each of the designs, which is fundamentally linked to training graduates with a general practice perspective to solve the health issues of the community as a whole and of the families that belong to it in particular.



Image 1: Highlighted Aspects in Skills wording.

When analyzing the skills, some aspects were highlighted in the wording; these had to do with dignity, values, virtues, respect for ethical principles, a sense of social responsibility. The integration of humanistic and professional, technical knowledge was also underscored.

In addition, the strategies that the course teachers implement were also identified. They were: Group debates, Analysis of clinical cases, Exchange forums, wikis, as well as the yearly organization of an Ethics activity day. Besides, the institution's virtual classroom favored synchronic and asynchronic exchanges between the teachers and the students.

5 Discussion on a person's privacy

Proposing ethics as a basis for current university programs means accepting the need for today's contemporary world to turn back to the human being and their intrinsic value. This involves accepting that, at the basis of every ethical thought from the beginning, is the conception of the human being and person as a foundation and the value of the human conduct.

The humanistic approach to teaching Health Sciences aims at improving mutual respect in the clinical relationship, as well as the opportunity for university students to develop their potential, reach a more adequate understanding, and acquire meaningful learning. This is essential when training health professionals since students, at the time of participating in their professional practices, act on their values and ethical principles, as well as their sensitivity and social responsibility as individuals of a society that needs to answer to the needs of a community according to their comprehensive training.

6 Conclusions

It is very meaningful for Higher Level institutions to permanently reflect on the projects of their courses and their implementation at university so that, if needed, they could adapt their strategies to the new challenges that are presented.

This paper allowed valuing the contributions of Bioethics to curricular fields. In this sense, there was an examination of the contents proposed for university curricula that, in the medium term, will allow judging based on more solid basis their strategies in general and in particular for the medical and dentistry practices.

7 Limitations and Future Research

A new project could widen the review to the curricular designs of other Academic institutions that pose questions and different perspectives as regards the university training of graduates in Health Sciences.

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