

**Healthcare Ethics Committee (HCEC) of NBC**  
**Tuesday, May 21, 2013, 9.00 am to 11.30 am (Meeting #3)**

**Venue:** CBEC-SIUT, Karachi

**Present:** Aasim Ahmed (AA), Haroon Ahmed (HA), Aamir Jafarey (AJ), Shaukat Jawaid (SJ), Farid Khan (FK), Farhat Moazam (FM)

**Minutes (by FM, May 23, 2013)**

**1. Review of minutes of previous meeting and matters arising:**

The minutes were reviewed and approved without amendment.

In matters arising, the following were noted – A) FM’s letter to PMDC President requesting representative for HCEC received neither acknowledgment nor response. This issue will apparently stay unresolved until after PMDC elections scheduled for later this year. B) Attempts by NBC (Dr. Huma Qureshi’s letters to relevant individuals) to get information re. Provincial Bioethics Committees have met with a similar fate and it is possible that these have not yet been established.

FM mentioned HQ’s email (May 16) to NBC members informing them that the PMRC has been shifted from the Cabinet Division to the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulation and Coordination, and that due to this fact the next NBC meeting cannot take place before the end of June. In the discussion that followed, none of the HCEC members were aware as to how this shift will affect the already irregular NBC meetings to date and this Committee’s continuing “orphaned” status within the government hierarchy.

**2. NBC decisions (April 18 meeting) relevant to HCEC:**

FM updated the group about discussions/decisions in this meeting, chaired by Mr. Arshad Ali, Assistant Cabinet Secretary. Many of these, including Mr. Arshad’s promise to pursue PMDC

and provincial chief secretaries about PBCs, are now moot in light of the shifting of NBC to a different department. Approval by NBC of the name change from MEC to HCEC will also have to wait until whenever the next NBC meeting takes place.

Another decision in the meeting was that the list of names submitted to NBC Secretariat by university/institution heads (deadline end of April) for replacement of retiring NBC members, will be circulated to NBC members no later than the second week in May. This has not been done yet. HCEC members believe that this is an important step as some replacements could also be inducted as provincial representatives in HCEC.

**\*Task: FM will email HQ and ask for progress in this matter.**

### **3. Co-opted members for HCEC from provinces:**

In the April meeting, NBC gave approval for the HCEC to identify and co-opt members with appropriate backgrounds from other provinces. NBC will provide travel and accommodation support to them to attend HCEC meetings. The group decided on the following –

**Criteria:** No more than 2-3 members will be co-opted in the beginning. These should be individuals with evidence of one or more of the following - interest and involvement in healthcare ethics activities, experience in teaching ethics to undergraduate and postgraduate students, and a postgraduate diploma/degree in the subject.

#### **Consensus on names (among several discussed):**

- *Asma Humayun* (psychiatrist) from Islamabad; active in writing on aspects of ethics in public press and professional journals; would strengthen mental health aspects.

**\* HA will email Jehangir and assess her interest and availability**

- *Saima Iqbal* (family medicine), Shifa International University, Islamabad; involved in teaching ethics to medical students; has several ethics publications; possesses both a postgraduate diploma and MA degree in bioethics (CBEC).

**\* FM will email Iqbal to check interest and availability.**

- *Shuja'at Said* from Dir, Pakhtunkhawa; has an MA in Bioethics (AKU); involved in teaching bioethics although details not known.

**\* AA will email Said to get details of what he is doing and assess suitability to be co-opted into HCEC.**

- *Abdul Ghani* from Quetta, Balochistan; has a postgraduate diploma in medical ethics (CBEC); employed by the provincial government; a year ago was named for the proposed Balochistan Bioethics Committee (FM was copied this email).

**\* FM will email Ghani to check if the Balochistan PBC has indeed been constituted and whether he is a member.**

#### **4. Discussions on the Undergraduate Ethics Curriculum Guidelines:**

A detailed discussion took place on the drafts turned in by each HCEC members providing outlines/contents related to specific curriculum areas assigned to them in the last meeting. Each draft was reviewed and modifications suggested. As expected, there were significant variations among the documents in the formatting, structure, and content details. Members were requested to redo their drafts conforming to the Template provided in the “Working Paper” distributed in the last meeting and to use the suggested headings. The next set of drafts will be discussed in the next HCEC meeting.

A consensus was reached on the following – A) The proposed ethics curriculum should be spread over all the years of medical/dental college education. B) The “preclinical” years could include simple introductory lectures to cover ethical concepts that would be subsequently reinforced during clinical rotations. C) The total time covering ethics education should perhaps be in the range of 40-45 hours (no consensus was reached). D) Evaluation/grades must be mandatory and could be included within appropriate existing examinations.

**\*Task: HCEC members will modify their drafts as discussed and email these to FM no later than the agreed upon deadline of June 15, 2013.**

The group also agreed that once the curriculum content has been finalized, assistance will be required from someone with appropriate background to format the final document. Shahid Shameem, a surgeon with an MA in medical education (DUHS) and a postgraduate diploma in medical ethics (CBEC), was considered a good person to do so. He has recently shifted to Riyadh to organize the medical education program in the university and may have the time, and be willing to assist. SJ mentioned that Professor A. Majeed Chaudhry, Principal of the Lahore Medical and Dental College, is also experienced in medical education and his opinion could also be sought at some stage.

**\*Task: FM will contact Shahid Shameem and ask if he is willing to help.**

#### **5) AOB:**

There was a brief discussion about the desirability of making the HCEC webpage interesting and keeping it “alive.” One suggestion was to include in it “position” of HCEC on common ethical issues that surface in the country. Example: The increasing number of physicians appearing in advertisements. Due to lack of time, this matter was deferred for another meeting.

**The next HCEC meeting will be held in CBEC on Tuesday, August 13, 2013 from 9.00 am to 11.00 am.**