

Editorial

If, at an individual level, the importance of health for people's welfare is undeniable, to the extent that "good health" wishes are part of the traditional birthday and New Year greetings, even more can be acknowledged regarding the field as a structural element of public policies inherent to citizenship.

Hence, any threat to the maintenance of this right is a cause for extreme concern, since it is one of the milestones of the consolidation of Brazilian democracy, established by the 1988 Constitution¹ and implemented two years later through the Lei Orgânica da Saúde (Organic Law of Health)², which established the regulatory principles and organizational structure of the Sistema Único de Saúde (SUS - Brazilian Unified Health System). Therefore, the idea that we cannot lose constitutionally acquired rights, such as universal access to health and education, make up the current list of demands of Brazilian society³⁻⁵.

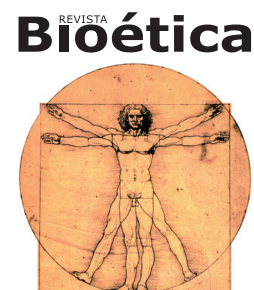
With respect to bioethics, such a claim becomes even more striking because the structure of Brazilian theoretical and applied bioethics created a *corpus* of indigenous knowledge, geared to public and collective health issues. The focus of Brazilian bioethics is in the social, sanitary and epidemiological contexts of the country, which allowed that, over the past decades, this field of study transcended the principlism theory and accompanies the SUS ideology, establishing the social dimension as a legitimate sphere for consideration.

Thus, we can say that in Brazil ethical theory and applied ethics go hand in hand to produce the bioethical dialogue, promoting fruitful communication, aimed to guide public policies and social health practices. It was this instrumental consortium between theory and practice, together with the political or ideological struggles, that "politicized" bioethics, allowing teaching and research to respond to the health related conflicts of the Brazilian population. In our society a "bridge" was established through the struggle for democracy and consolidation of citizenship, under the protection of human rights.

The success of the approach adopted by Brazilian bioethics has been endorsed by the *Declaração Universal sobre Bioética e Direitos Humanos* (Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights)⁶, which reaffirms the universal character of the citizenship milestones, especially those related to life, health and education. In this sense, it should be noted that the teaching of bioethics at undergraduate and graduate level also needs to expand its focus beyond principlism, stimulating the dissemination of social bioethics. Both to gather professionals and students from other fields and to increase the knowledge of healthcare professionals with other theoretical and methodological tools, socially responsible bioethics contributes to the interdisciplinary production of knowledge that can, in fact, respond to society's aspirations.

This process that is aimed to promote dialogue relates directly to the essence of this field of knowledge. The bioethical reflection, which is the "method" that underlies applied ethics, can be considered as *the act or effect of reflecting*⁷, identifying at least two positions - the self and the other – upon which to ponder in search for solutions to conflicts, or as a *virtue that consists of preventing hasty judgment, recklessness, and impulsive conduct*⁸. Any of these meanings can only be achieved when the link between parties has not been broken, when there is effective communication, and dialogue is the means to elucidate the meanings that each party attributes to the action.

And it is precisely to celebrate another bridge between the biomedical and social fields that we published Resolution 510/16⁹ of the Conselho Nacional de Saúde –



CNS (Brazilian National Health Council) at the end of this issue. Recognizing the characteristics specific to research in the humanities and social sciences, CNS has approved a norm aimed to ensure the *evaluation of ethics in research procedures in this field of knowledge*⁹.

Note that the negotiation of the norm resulted from a long and arduous process of rapprochement between fields, intensified since the revision of CNS Resolution 196/96¹⁰. CNS Resolution 466/12¹¹ acknowledged the need for a specific norm, allowing for the creation of a working group *to prepare a resolution specific to ethics in research in the humanities and social sciences within the sphere of the Comissão Nacional de Ética em Pesquisa (National Research Ethics Commission) / Conselho Nacional de Saúde (National Health Council) / Ministério da Saúde (Ministry of Health)*⁹.

The publication of the norm for evaluation of ethics in research in the humanities and social sciences demonstrates fully the need to maintain dialogue and stimulate communication, even (or especially) in the face of difficulties. The regulation of the research process in the humanities and social sciences will bring equanimity to researchers and security to participants, strengthening the guarantees of access to human rights.

The editors

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