

Cambridge Consortium of Bioethics Education Turkey Working Group

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The Cambridge Consortium of Bioethics Education

The Cambridge Consortium of Bioethics Education was established by the Cambridge University Press in 2011. The Platform mainly aimed at developing bioethics education through annual meetings with other bioethics educators around the world to share experiences and ideas on developing curricula (1). The Consortium initiated country-based Working Groups in June 2013, specifically in Hungary, New Zealand, Pan-Arab (Lebanon), Romania, Russia, Serbia, Spain, The Netherlands, and Turkey (2).

The purpose of the Working Groups is to encourage people and institutions to work together on developing bioethics education in their countries by setting up focus groups that invite others to share information and develop mutual projects; to further how bioethics is taught in universities, hospitals, and to the general public.

Turkey Working Group

Upon the invitation of the Cambridge Consortium, the Turkey Working Group was established in 2013. Focus Group Members in Turkey are composed of Murat Aksu, Fatih Artvinli, Nadi Bakirci, Tuna Cakar, Muhtar Cokar, Figen Demir, Mustafa Volkan Kavas, Gulsum Onal, Isil Pakis, Melike Sahiner, Pinar Topsever, Inci User, Yesim Isil Ulman (chair), Kevser Vatansever, Vedat Yildirim. The Group is based in the History of Medicine and Ethics Department at Acibadem University School of Medicine in Istanbul. The Group dynamic is based on the volunteering zeal and dedication of the professionals forming this collective.

Some of the Activities of the Turkey Working Group

The Cambridge Turkey Working Group began to act by organizing workshops to develop its aims and strategies. The Group is mostly benefiting from the task group working methodology. Members are professionals from diverse competencies and they prefer working interdisciplinary. The aims of the Group are to raise awareness in ethics education and moral decision making in academic and in clinical setting; to work multiprofessionally in coordination with other healthcare professionals; to enhance advocacy of ethics teaching at universities; to follow humanities perspective; to share ideas on curriculum development; to compare and learn mutually from the combined experiences; to choose topics for discussion on issues of bioethics and society; to structure multi-based research among countries. The Group members place special importance to work in a cross-disciplinary way through the perspective of medical humanities (3).

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It has opened a specific website to facilitate the cooperation and sharing of information by recording its activities as well^c.

At its second workshop (in December 2013), the Group proposed that bioethics be part of overall academic curricula both at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Such a curriculum should include both contemporary international syllabi on the ethics of health sciences, as well as issues of interdisciplinary methodology in bioethics and health law (5).

It was also decided to participate in May 2014 the 2nd Conference of International Association of Ethics Education (IAEE) for the purpose of sharing aims and strategies in development by the Group. The Group introduced itself to the academic audience by an oral presentation at the 2nd Conference of IAEE in Ankara 2014 (6).

Third Workshop of the Group: “Can Ethics be Taught?”

The Cambridge Bioethics Education Turkey Working Group conducted its 3rd Workshop on the theme of the "*Can ethics be taught?*" in order to discuss the methodology of ethics education. The workshop was held at the Ankara University School of Medicine on May 23rd, 2014, by the participation of bioethicists, medical educators, public health experts, a philosopher, a jurist, nursing ethicists, a clinician, an undergraduate and a graduate medical students; namely Murat Aksu, Nadi Bakırcı (Moderator), Zehra Gocmen Baykara, Onur Cecen, Dilan Cetin, Mehmet Demirci, Gunes Okuyucu Ergun, Mukadder Gun, Mustafa Volkan Kavas (Local Organiser, Reporter), Tutku Ozdogan, Sukran Sevimli, Sinan Sencan, Yesim Isil Ulman, and Kevser Vatansever (Moderator). They composed two groups to answer two principal questions:

1- How can bioethics be learned?

- How does the learning environment effect the development of ethical values, ethical decision-making, and learning? How? (+/ -)
- What situations facilitate learning bioethics during medical education?
 - Student’s perspective ?
 - Facilities available for the study?
 - Clinical perspective ?
 - Educator’s perspective ?

2- What methods / approaches need to be developed to teach bioethics?

- Who is responsible for teaching bioethics in faculty and in clinical settings?
- What are the learning aims and outcomes in
 - Preclinical Years?
 - Clinical Clerkship Years?
 - Post Graduate Years?
- What are the most suitable learning methods?
 - What are the pre-requisites for an effective education? How are they achieved?
 - What should the learning environment conditions be like?
 - What are the characteristics of the educators?
 - What is the function of ethical issues in healthcare provision?
 - How should assessment be conducted in bioethics education?

^c With the permission of the Acibadem University, the webpage of the Cambridge Consortium of Bioethics Education Turkey Working Group has been located at the official website of the Acibadem University (4).

By the end of the day the two groups presented their ideas for general discussion. The critical analyses of both subgroups produced the overall Report. The Cambridge Bioethics Education Turkey Working Group has achieved a multidisciplinary, stimulating, self-critical, objective, learning-based and innovative workshop to contribute to the ethics educators in the academy. This Report constituted the backbone of the Annual Presentation at the 4th Cambridge Consortium of Bioethics Education held in Paris, on June 23-25, 2014 (7). This Report will be elaborated as an academic paper soon (8).

Future plans of the Group at national and international levels

At its 5th workshop, Cambridge Bioethics Education Turkey Working Group included in its agenda to outline a Curricular Inventory of Ethics Education in Turkey. The aims of this Project is: to assess academic teaching infrastructure for medical ethics; to assess topics about medical ethics included in the curricula; to assess academic profile (teaching manpower) and professional background of faculty involved in teaching medical ethics; to assess educational strategies and curriculum design in terms of medical ethics [workload, context, teaching-learning methodologies, assessment of student performance (expected level of performance), evaluation of curriculum]. This multibased research is forthcoming (9).

Turkey Working Group contributed to the Cambridge Consortium Interim Meeting in Amsterdam VU University Medical Centre, Department of Medical Humanities on January 29, 2015. The representatives of the Turkey Group, Yesim Isil Ulman PhD, Kevser Vatansever MD, PhD, Volkan Kavas MD, PhD exemplified the activities of the Turkey Group; and on behalf of the Group, Dr. K. Vatansever presented a Draft Research Proposal for international collaboration. The meeting ended with the definition of the work plan and task division and it was agreed to meet at the 5th Consortium to be held in Paris in June 2015 (10).

The Turkey Working Group continues to work in line with its aims and strategies. Members of the Turkey Group kindly proposed the Cambridge Consortium to include ethical issues in developing countries for discussion in the Consortium agenda, as well. The Group members would also like to thank the colleagues in Turkey who support them.

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