

errors, paternalistic attitudes among doctors, their vulnerability to self-prescribing, spiritual dilemmas, the role of alternative medications, and so on. Roxanne's rumination, "Even for me, sometimes it's hard to get information ... So I can't imagine what it's like for some patients out there" will surely strike a chord among many.

The book makes a strong case for better training to make doctors comprehend the experiences of patients with greater sensitivity and empathy. If one is ready to overlook some of the shortcomings discussed earlier, the book is worth a read. But it is doubtful whether the book would really help doctors to be better patients and to realistically know what to expect

Organ transplantation: bridging the technology-ethics gap

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Silke Schicktanz, Claudia Wiesemann, Sabine Wohlke, editors. *Teaching ethics in organ transplantation and tissue donation*. Universitätsverlag Gottingen; 2010. Pp81. ISBN 978-3-941875-40-1

Ever since the first organ transplant was successfully performed in the 1950s, controversies surrounding the scope and consequences of this medical intervention have attracted more attention than its potential human benefit. While the medical world finds in it the potential to provide effective treatment for end state organ failure, the various steps involved in the treatment—selection of donor and recipient, the process and stages of decision making, the diverse cultural and religious practices and beliefs—raise complex ethical challenges. Religious institutions often view the very idea of organ transplantation skeptically. Yet it has evolved as a widely accepted medical practice and continues to give hope to millions of patients, across the world, who suffer from potentially life-threatening ailments.

Organ transplantation offers several novel solutions to intricate medical problems and consequently enhances the quality of living and reinstalls hope in the lives of millions. But it simultaneously generates different responses in different cultures and introduces certain insoluble moral dilemmas. For instance, the ethical problems it raises in a liberal democratic environment would be characteristically different from those in more traditional communitarian societies with strong patriarchal social norms and values. This book edited by Silke Schicktanz, Claudia Wiesemann and Sabine Wohlke introduces a number of such ethical dilemmas by presenting cases from diverse socio-cultural contexts and exploring ways to tackle them.

The book has three parts; the first deals with a conceptual analysis of the ethical issues associated with organ donation. The second part extensively discusses several cases that bring out the intricacies of the ethics of organ donation. The third section discusses the prospect of using movies as teaching materials in highlighting the ethical issues in organ transplantation.

The discussion on organ transplantation begins with a working definition of this process—as a surgical replacement of a malfunctioning organ by another human organ—and a description of the various types of transplantations practised. After an analysis of the success rates in the transplantation of various organs, the book examines the ethics of organ transplantation and tissue donation in different scenarios where the donors are either living or dead. The authors remind us that, since organ transplantation is a global and transnational endeavour, it raises universal ethical concerns. Yet like any other socio-technological practice, it has to negotiate with culturally mediated beliefs.

After this introductory analysis, more substantial moral challenges are addressed by problematising serious questions about human identity, dignity and the meaning of the human body in the context of organ transplantation. The authors show how the problem of organ commodification and trading further introduces ethical problems. Several factors add to the complexity of the situation. Though, from the outset, commercialisation seems to be objectionable, from many other perspectives it seems to have its virtues. Further, the book examines the ethical problems raised by the possibilities of xenotransplantation. The authors also point to certain issues related to "organ shortage", as there has been a steep increase in the number of patients in need of organs in recent years.

The section on case studies comprehensively deals with the multiple aspects of the ethics of organ transplantation and discusses a wide range of cases from different backgrounds and attempts to suggest possible solution(s) for them. These cases, though situated in diverse cultural contexts, nevertheless present certain serious ethical issues that have global significance and also highlight the dilemmas arising out of conflicts between traditional moral assumptions and the possibilities of modern technological contexts.

The third important aspect the book addresses is the prospect of exploiting the pedagogic value of movies and using them to interpret, elaborate and critically discuss ethical issues by

presenting before the viewers imaginary situations where such issues are encountered. The authors give a list of movies, but do not discuss them in detail.

This book reminds us that the domain of bioethics keeps constantly offering patients and healthcare professionals several such insoluble moral dilemmas, as it is impossible to approach them with a set of norms that are globally fixed. Each context offers a range of ethical challenges, which have to be negotiated, taking into account several social, cultural, religious, economic, and legal factors.

The book addresses some vital issues of tremendous

contemporary value, but the reader may reasonably expect a little more discussion on some of the problems presented. The authors take for granted that the readers are familiar with certain moral concepts and issues, identity, meaning of body, etc, which have different connotations in different cultures. The section on cases is arguably the most interesting part of the book and leaves room for a lot of discussion. This makes the book a valuable classroom resource for bioethics instructors.

The book reminds us that, despite its strength in contributing to substantial human welfare and happiness, technology often becomes an agent of human alienation.

A model for holistic rural health

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Ulhas Jajoo: *Towards holistic rural health: Sarvodaya way. Sevagram, Wardha: Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Medical Sciences; 2012. 205pp. INR 300.*

Gandhiji penned *Hind Swaraj* on board a ship in 1909, and its continuing and universal relevance has been reaffirmed even today. Dr. Ulhas Jajoo's book is an encore of *Hind Swaraj*. The book is charged with core truths, applicable anywhere, for anybody, *with no need for any financial largesse*. The widespread applicability of Prof. Ulhas Jajoo's pioneering work requires only the will to act, with results assured in many ways. Dr. Jajoo's thesis, his vision, is beyond the caprices of space, time, and statistics.

The title term "holistic" conjures up the vision of a human body pepped up by the right food/exercise/medicines/meditation, a self-centred view of health. Dr. Ulhas Jajoo encompasses in his vision just a little of the foregoing and a lot of socio-economic factors ranging from the absence of motorable roads, even make-shift toilets, medicines or medical care; coupled with joblessness and loss of spirit, unwillingness to cooperate, the dangers of small but unexpected earnings against a background of farming and dairy farming. The chapter *Eureka!* is immediately followed by the realisation of *The shattered dreams*, a climactic comedown that speaks volumes of the down-to-earth realities that the author and his large team are conscious of.

The Bhagwad Gita on the one hand, and Gandhiji and Vinoba on the other have reiterated, time and again, the irrelevance of material gains in the absence of a backdrop of spirituality, decency, societal consciousness, and the appreciation of one's duties to society and humanity. Alexis Carrel, the Nobel laureate, who penned the classic *Man the Unknown* had pointed out, in the 1930's, that medical science pays too much attention to "so much protein and much vitamin," forgetting all the while that frequent doses of spirituality and meaningful

prayers are even more vital. The Sicilian literary Nobel Prize winner, Quasimodo Salvatore, summed up the modern man, *Homo modernus et scientificus* as "Heartless, Loveless, and Christless." Be it the crumbling West, the struggling Far East, or the so-called emergent economies of the BRIC group— Brazil, Russia, India, China – the GNP runs parallel to Gross National Perversion in terms of crime, drug addiction, alcoholism, rapes and murders. On a tiny nuclear scale, Ulhas Jajoo illustrates how economic gains get rapidly matched by social decay. Given the clout of money and the media, and of crass commercialism, this may be the most difficult nut to crack. Gandhiji tried and failed. The Gujarati poet-educationist Karsandas Manek sized up India and its Indianness in a haiku, circa 1948.

Oh! Independence

Thou petal of freedom

We dunces

Chewed you up!

That Dr Jajoo has succeeded in rendering as many as 15 villages healthy, and that too in a sustained holistic fashion, augurs well for his welcome crusade.

Another title term "rural" needs elaboration. The inevitable assumption is that things are alright with the urban areas, a presumption belied by Indian urbania's fouled up air, gutterised water, filth all around, food scarce and costly, and social unrest and crime that seem to be chronically on the upswing. That the investors and the political powers gleefully collaborated in describing medical services as the "health care industry" automatically gave the profession the right to seek dollars-in-disease and see patients-as-profit. The kickbacks and commissions have seen to it that whereas all other commodities symbolising sophistication: mobiles, laptops, I-pads, computers and TV screens, DVD players, all progressively come down in