



# CBR Newsletter

A Newsletter of West African Bioethics  
Training Programme



**Center for Bioethics and Research**

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### About CBR

Center for Bioethics and Research, Nigeria is a registered non-governmental organization operating in capacity building, particularly in the areas of research ethics, responsible conduct of research and research administration. We collaborate with faculty members in the University of Ibadan, Nigeria to train post graduate students for Masters' degree in Bioethics.

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## MSC Bioethics Trainees

Two students were admitted this session for the masters degree program on partial scholarship.

- **Mr Famakinde Akintoye Joshua:** He is a Pharmacist at the Federal Medical Center, Owo, Ondo State.
- **Mr Enekwechi Chukwunike Samuel:** He is a graduate of B.A Philosophy, from the University of Ibadan, Nigeria.



From Left to Right: Mr Famakinde Akintoye Joshua and Mr Enekwechi Chukwunike Samuel.



## **My Experience as a WAB Scholar**

I am Onochie Ikechukwu Okoye, a bioethicist and ophthalmologist from Nigeria. My principal duties at my parent institutions (University of Nigeria and University Of Nigeria Teaching Hospital, Ituku –Ozalla, Enugu, Nigeria) include clinical services, teaching, training, research, administration and community work.

For some reasons beyond my comprehension, I had always nursed some measure of interest in the field of bioethics, without even having a clear sense of its nature and scope. When I offered to drive one of my senior female medical colleagues, also my teacher and trainer (Prof Rich Umeh) to the Enugu Airport sometime in 2007, little did I know that i was taking the first steps which would eventually translate to an unplanned odyssey to this highly specialized field of bioethics. In the course of our discussions en route our destination, I mentioned my desire to pursue further postgraduate training to prepare me for life as a researcher. This consequently triggered off an exchange of ideas which culminated in my opting to apply for a scholarship from the West African Bioethics training program (WAB). By September/October 2007, I had found myself in the ancient city of Ibadan registering for the MSc degree program in bioethics at the University of Ibadan (UI), Nigeria as a WAB scholar.

Prior to my participation in this highly intensive 3-semester program, my initial responses on bioethical issues could at best be described as knee jerk and impulsive. Of course, these reactions were largely premised on my medical knowledge, life experiences, and religious beliefs as a Christian and the little I knew of bioethics. Undergoing the training turned out to be a truly life-changing and humbling experience. I was quickly reminded about how little I knew about other perspectives on life and human existence. The program was planned in such a way that it put some structure and organization into my thinking process, pushed me to think deep, hard and long on issues raised for deliberation, and molded me into respecting the opinions of other people.

Looking back on the experiences I garnered from my sojourn in the University of Ibadan, I cannot help but have a laugh at myself. Having seamlessly and successfully completed residency training in ophthalmology and a couple of other sub-specialist training programs a couple of years prior to my UI admission, i was cocksure that I could effortlessly handle the associated rigours of post-graduate academic life in the university.

## **My Experience as a WAB Scholar**

Initially, i had walked into the classroom in my first week believing that i was prepared for what was to befall me, but i could not have been more naïve and presumptuous. From the Philosophy and Foundations of Bioethics modules through the modules on social/behavioral research and research designs/protocol review process to the modules on clinical ethics and the highly challenging yet illuminating biostatistics plus the research project, it was an exciting, humbling and inspiring adventure to an entirely new body of knowledge.

We had series of lectures/tutorials, case studies, film/book reviews, review of topical bioethics controversies and interactive sessions. We also had intimidating volumes of readings to cover, as well as assignments to do. The training took me far beyond what I thought I knew about research/clinical practice and what I had previously read in many textbooks and journals as a medical student, resident doctor and even, as a consultant ophthalmologist. I was introduced to the world of Hippocrates, Aristotle, Plato, Kant, Ross, Thomas Aquinas, Rawls, Singer, Beauchamp, Childress, Marshall, Ezekiel Emanuel, David Wendler, Jeremy Sugarman, and Clement Adebamowo. I

became a historian overnight, having being

taught about the Nazi war crimes and the Nuremberg trial/code, the Wichita Jury study, the Willowbrook Hepatitis studies, the Jewish Chronic Disease Hospital studies, the Milgram studies of obedience to authority, the Tearoom trade study, the Tuskegee syphilis study and the Pfizer Kano Trovan study.



**Dr Onochie Okoye at the Dorothy J. Maclean Fellows Conference, U.S.A, 2016.**



## **My Experience as a WAB Scholar**

I quickly learnt strange-sounding and highfalutin words which became the basis of my bioethical and medical lexicon. Words such as Nicomachean ethics, autonomy, informed consent, assent, paternalism, Belmont report, Helsinki Declaration, principlism, utilitarianism, deontology, casuistry, beneficence, coercion, exploitation, therapeutic misconception, confidentiality, logistic regression, power of a study, conflict of interest, vulnerable populations, institutional review board, protocol review, risk-benefit analysis, euthanasia, genomics, bio-banking and NHREC (pronounced en-rec for: National Health Research Ethics Committee of Nigeria).

Apart from the numerous highly intellectual, eye-opening and engaging debates and interactions we had with the faculty, I had ample opportunity to forge close, respectful and enduring friendships with all my course mates and most of the faculty/staff at the bioethics center. Though it may sound trite to some people, this aspect may actually be one of the most important things I remember vividly about my training program. Our class had the rare opportunity of studying under a very conducive learning environment (constant power supply, un-interrupted internet connectivity, access to international publications and relevant educational materials) and being trained by very knowledgeable, talented and unassuming lecturers/resource persons. I lived in the very comfortable residence provided by the WAB, along with a couple of my other colleagues. This, to a large extent, helped to build a strong bond among us which invariably enabled all of us to live cordially as one big family.

Since graduation from the MSc Bioethics program, I have assumed some professionally rewarding responsibilities/positions and been involved in a couple of activities which are related to bioethics. I have also attended courses such as the 36th Intensive Bioethics Course of the Kennedy Institute of Ethics at the Georgetown University, Washington DC, USA (June 2010) and the Research Ethics Course organized by the Steve Biko Center for Bioethics, University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa (February 2011), and meetings like the 2nd World Conference on Research Integrity and 10th World Bioethics Congress in Singapore (July 2010) as well as the 2014 PRIM&R Advancing Ethical Research conference in Baltimore, Maryland, USA (December 2014) and more recently, the 27th and 28th Annual Dorothy J MacLean Fellows Conference in Chicago, USA (November 2015, 2016).

## **My Experience as a WAB Scholar**

I am a very active member of the Health Research Ethics Committee of the University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital, Ituku-Ozalla, Enugu, Nigeria (UNTH HREC). I am also a member of the Ethics Committee of the Ophthalmological Society of Nigeria, where I have been charged with the mandate of developing a code of ethics that will be applicable to ophthalmic practice and research in Nigeria. In the Enugu State Chapter of the Nigerian Medical Association, I also serve on the ethics committee. In my parent institution (University of Nigeria), I currently act as the co-coordinator of a university-wide research group called the Bioethics Research interest group, which has the mandate of stimulating and promoting research in bioethics-related issues. With the support of some of my colleagues in my university and Prof Adebamowo, we have finalized plans to commence a postgraduate degree program in bioethics at the medical school from the 2017/2018 academic session. I am also the co-



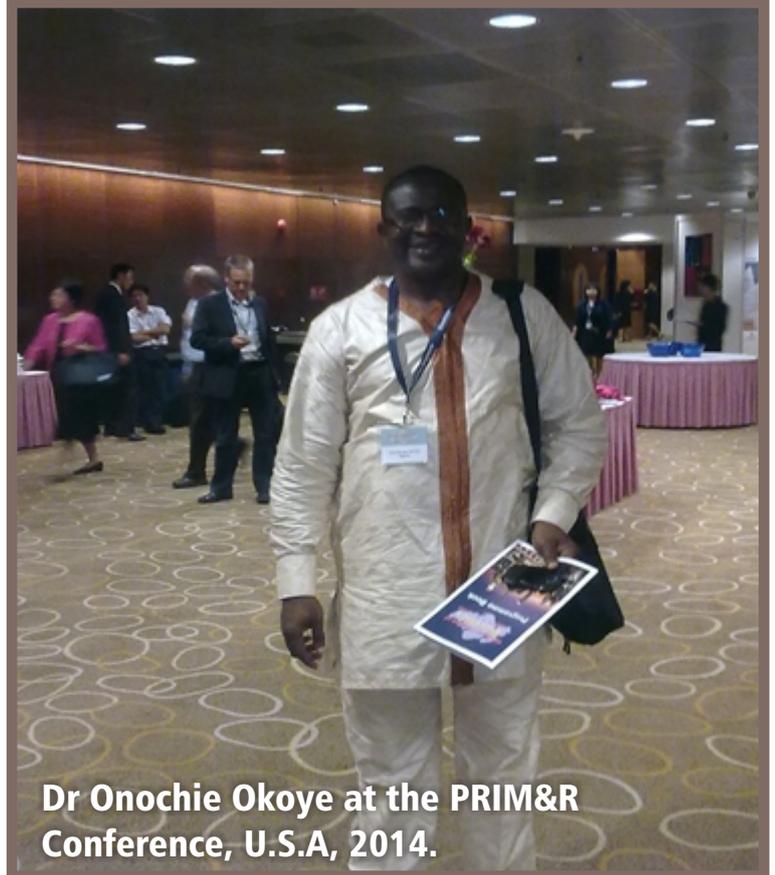
**Dr Onochie Okoye at the 10th World Bioethics Congress in Singapore, July 2010.**

coordinator for the Responsible Conduct of Research course of our institutional REC; the first of which we held on June 18, 2015 in collaboration with the West African Bioethics Program. In the course of time, we hope to make this an annual event.

Apart from making bioethics-related publications, I have also attended a couple of other ethics-related meetings in which I made presentations, namely the 2nd African Health Research Ethics Symposium (Sep/Oct 2010) organized by SARETI in Durban, South Africa; 2nd Annual Good Clinical Practice and Proposal writing course organized by the AGCPN in Enugu, Nigeria (June 2011); Responsible Conduct of Research workshop organized by the MEPIN in Enugu, Nigeria (August 2011); EAGER-AFRICA International Conference on Ethics and Genomics Research in Africa held in Abuja, Nigeria (November 2011);

## **My Experience as a WAB Scholar**

Training workshop on proposal writing/research methodology for the 2013 African Research League grant held in Enugu, Nigeria (February 2013); Research Methodology Workshop organized by MEPIN in Enugu (April 2013); Vision 2020 stakeholders meeting organized by CBM/Vision2020 in Jos, Nigeria (August 2013); Faculty development workshop on Innovative Adult Teaching Methodologies organized by the CCCRN, Enugu, Nigeria (Sept 2013); Intensive course in HIV/AIDS care organized by the CCCRN in Enugu (Oct 2013); Training workshop for HREC members organized by the UNTH HREC (June 2014); 9th International Scientific Conference of the Association of Catholic Medical Practitioners of Nigeria in Enugu (July 2014); Step-down



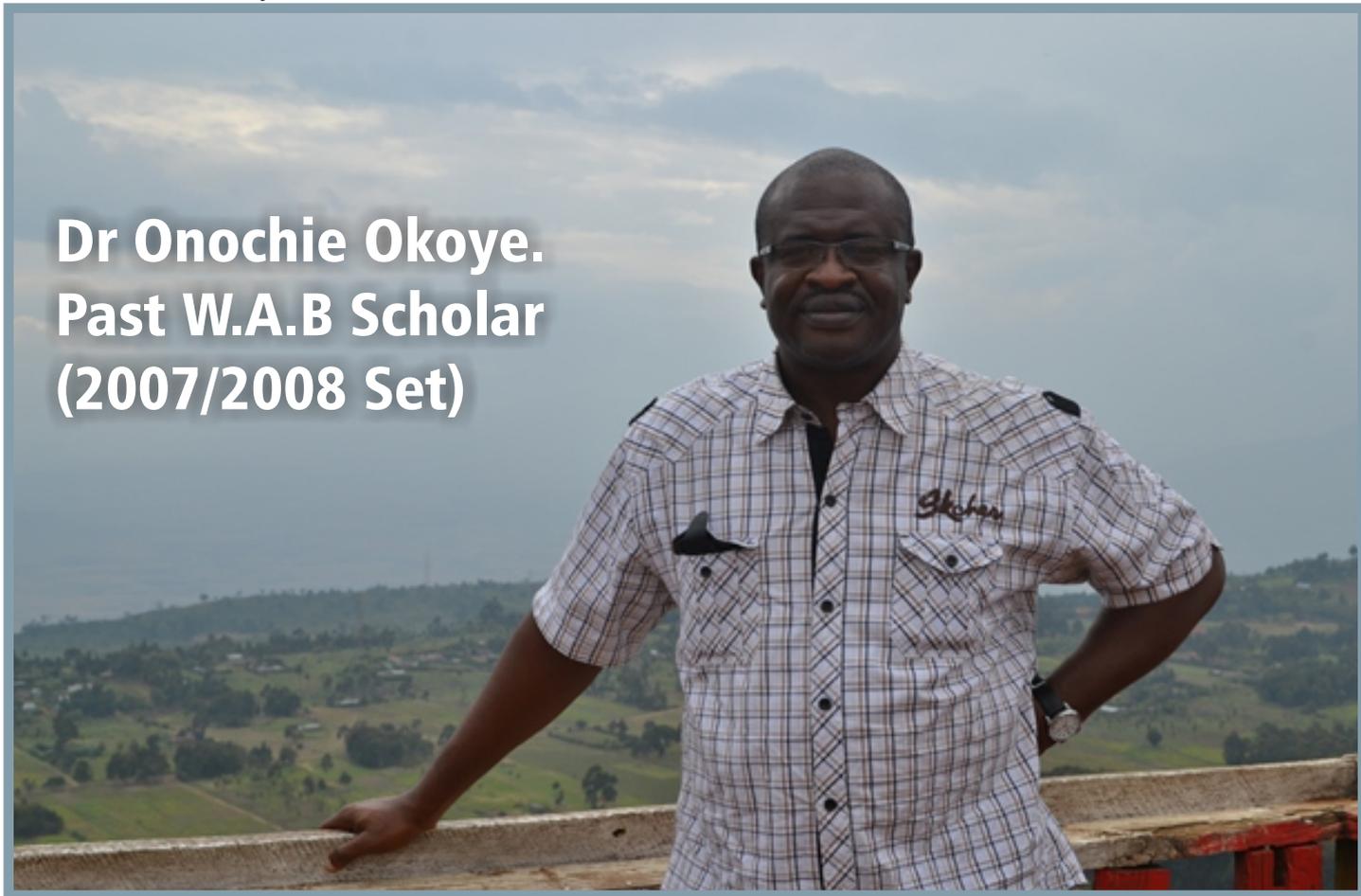
**Dr Onochie Okoye at the PRIM&R Conference, U.S.A, 2014.**

workshop in Bioethics organized by the MEPIN in Enugu (July 2014); 34th, 35th, 36th, 37th, 38th Annual Scientific meetings of the Ophthalmological Society of Nigeria (2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013); PRIM&R Advancing Ethical Research (AER) conference in Nashville, USA (2009) and the Maclean Centre Fellows Research Presentation Conference held in University of Chicago, USA ( May 2015).

Until my joining the one-year clinical medical ethics fellowship at the MacLean center (University of Chicago) in July 2015, I had functioned as the chair in ophthalmology at my parent institutions. On completion of this fellowship program, I was elevated to the position of a senior fellow at the center. As part of the fellowship, I have been attending the clinical ethics consultation meetings and working largely on the development of an appropriate undergraduate medical ethics curriculum for Nigerian universities and innovative methods of teaching bioethics in Sub-Saharan Africa.

## **My Experience as a WAB Scholar**

I am also developing a model for clinical ethics consultation services in Nigeria; one which will be sensitive to our local issues and health care practices/value systems and be in line with global best practices. Other current research interests include consent issues in secondary use of stored human biological samples, medical errors, prognostication in end-of-life care and allocation of resources in human organ transplantation programs. I have also been assisting in the Doctor-Patient Relationship Course, a winter module for the First year Medical students in the University of Chicago. By virtue of my background in bioethics, I also act as a moderator in the on-line interactive "Fundamentals Of Clinical Research Course", a course being organized by the Center For Global Health, University of Chicago. On the whole, I can confidently assert that the MSc degree program in Bioethics at the University of Ibadan was very captivating, deeply informative and, has largely provided me with a stronger foundation for life as a human being, clinician, researcher, teacher/trainer, community worker, administrator and of course, bioethicist! Going forward, i still nurse the ambition of doing a PhD Program in bioethics and becoming very relevant to the bioethics community in Africa.

A photograph of Dr. Onochie Okoye, a man with glasses, wearing a white and black checkered short-sleeved shirt. He is standing outdoors with a scenic view of rolling green hills and a cloudy sky in the background. He has his left hand on his hip and his right hand resting on a concrete ledge.

**Dr Onochie Okoye.  
Past W.A.B Scholar  
(2007/2008 Set)**



## **New Intakes for 2016/2017 Academic Session**

The university is presently in the second semester of the 2015/2016 academic session and the sale of forms and admission process is over. Interviews will be conducted for applicants at the Department, and the names of successful applicants will be recommended and forwarded to the PG School.

## **Onsite/Institutional based step-down training**

The following onsite trainings were conducted by West African Bioethics Training Program faculty members from January 2016 to date.

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Attendance</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Training type</b>
The Federal Medical Center, Abuja.	Mar. 4 - 5	57	Members of the Ethics Committee and staff of the hospital.	Health Management and Ethics Course
IRRUA Specialist teaching hospital, Edo State.	May 18 - 19	79	Members of Health Research Ethics Committee.	Modern Research Ethics.
The Department for International Development. (D.F.I.D)	Nov. 30 – Dec.2	47	Members of Health Research Ethics Committees of 6 Northern States in Nigeria, and members of the Federal Ministry of Health, Abuja.	Modern Research Ethics.

The aim of the trainings is to strengthen the skills of members of the Research Ethics Committees on how to review research proposal and, or protocols submitted to them for Ethical Approval. Some of the plenary sessions taken at the trainings are listed;

- Principles of Research Ethics
- Health Research Ethics Regulation in Nigeria – Composition and Functions of the National and Institutional Health Research Ethics Committees
- Ethical Review Processes, annual reports and continuing reviews.
- Elements and Comprehension of an informed Consent.
- Research Misconduct.
- Exploitation, Benefits, Inducements and Compensation for Research Injuries and Vulnerable Populations.



## Students and Faculty Training

Rev. Fr. Olakunle Ewuoso - a graduate of W.A.B, received partial scholarship to attend Santander Scholarship workshop on theories and application organised by the Center for Ethics Education New York, from the 24th – 26th May 2016. He published an article on Bioethics Development in Nigeria, the article has been published by the Journal of Global Bioethics.

Please access the article online using the following link:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/eprint/JQnYF7NySxzrffEPGgmR/full>

## Appointments/ Achievements

- **Prof. (Mrs) Ebuloluwa Oduwole** – A Faculty Member of W.A.B and Editor of the BeOnline Journal was appointed to serve as Dean of Faculty of Arts, and elected as Deputy Vice Chancellor of Olabisi Onabanjo University.
- **Prof. Samuel Ayodele Jegede** – A Faculty Member of W.A.B was appointed to serve as Dean of Faculty of Social Science, University of Ibadan.
- **Prof. Ade Malomo** – A Faculty Member of W.A.B was appointed to serve as Dean of Clinical Sciences, University of Ibadan.
- **Prof. Ademola Ajuwon** – A Faculty Member of W.A.B was appointed to serve as Deputy Provost, College of Medicine, University of Ibadan.
- **Dr. Mrs Oluwatoyin Akintola** – A Faculty Member of W.A.B successfully completed her Ph.D. program on 'Future Unspecified Use of Tissue and Data in Biobank Research' from the University of Southampton.

## Online Collaborative Institution Training Initiative

As part of our partnership with the University of Florida Miami's CITI program, we provided 478 online CITI trainings in Informed Consent, Responsible Conduct of Research and a specialized module on the Nigerian National Code for Health Research Ethics from January 1st to November, 2016 and 123 certificates for the TRREE program from January 1st to November, 2016.



## **BeOnline Journal – Accepting Manuscripts for Review and Publication**

BeOnline, the Bioethics Online journal of the West African Bioethics Training is an open-access online journal. This journal contributes to the global discourse on bioethics with the focus of adding the voice of Africans and research in Africa to the debate about clinical and research ethics, primarily in Africa and in the world at large.

The Bioethics Online (BeOnline®) journal has just published its 3rd edition at

<http://www.bioethicscenter.net/journal/index.php/journal1/issue/view/BEOnline-Journal-Vol3/showToc..>

In this volume, there are papers on:

- [A Systematic Review of the Management of Incidental Findings in Genomic Research](#) - by Cornelius Olukunle Ewuoso.
- [The Ethics of Ebola Trial Drugs: to give or not to give?](#) - by Ebunoluwa Olufemi Oduwole, Kazeem Ademola Fayemi
- [Advance Directive in End of Life Decision](#) - by Ayodele Samuel JEGEDE
- [Decolonizing Bioethics in Africa](#) - by Ademola Kazeem Fayemi, Olawunmi Macaulay-Adeyelure

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<http://www.bioethicscenter.net/journal/> or send an email to [admin@bioethicscenter.net](mailto:admin@bioethicscenter.net)



## **Journal articles published by WAB Faculty Members and Students.**

**African Cultural Concept of Death and the Idea of Advance Care Directives. Ekore RI, Lanre-Abass B  
Indian J Palliat Care. 2016 Oct-Dec; 22(4): 369-372.**

### **Abstract**

An advance care directive is a person's oral or written instructions about his or her future medical care, if he or she becomes unable to communicate. It may be in written or oral form. Africans ordinarily do not encourage the contemplation of death or any discussion about their own or their loved ones' death. According to the African belief system, life does not end with death, but continues in another realm. Becoming an ancestor after death is a desirable goal of every individual, a feat which cannot be achieved if an individual asks for an unnatural death by attempting to utilize advance care directives. Advance care directives are considered to be too individualistic for communitarian societies such as Africa. Coupled with the communitarian nature of African societies are issues such as lack of awareness of advance directives, fear of death and grief, and the African cultural belief system, which are potential barriers to the utilization of advance care directives in the African setting. Hence, the need for culture sensitivity which makes it imperative that patient's family and loved ones are carried along as far as possible, without compromising the autonomy of the patient in question when utilizing advance care directives.

**Knowledge of the Nigerian Code of Health Research Ethics among Biomedical Researchers in Southern Nigeria. Ogunrin OA, Daniel F, Ansa V. J Empir Res Hum Res Ethics. 2016 Dec; 11(5): 397-407.**

### **Abstract**

Responsibility for protection of research participants from harm and exploitation rests on Research Ethics Committees and principal investigators. The Nigerian National Code of Health Research Ethics defines responsibilities of stakeholders in research so its knowledge among researchers will likely aid ethical conduct of research. The levels of awareness and knowledge of the Code among biomedical researchers in southern Nigerian research institutions was assessed. Four institutions were selected using a stratified random sampling technique. Research participants were selected by purposive sampling and completed a pre-tested structured questionnaire. A total of 102 biomedical researchers completed the questionnaires. Thirty percent of the participants were aware of the National Code though 64% had attended at least one training seminar in research ethics. Twenty-five percent had a fairly acceptable knowledge (scores 50%-74%) and 10% had excellent knowledge of the code (score  $\geq 75\%$ ). Ninety-five percent expressed intentions to learn more about the National Code and agreed that it is highly relevant to the ethical conduct of research. Awareness and knowledge of the Code were found to be very limited among biomedical researchers in southern Nigeria. There is need to improve awareness and knowledge through ethics seminars and training. Use of existing Nigeria-specific online training resources is also encouraged.

*The entire WAB family wishes you all*

*Merry Christmas*

*&*

*Happy New Year*



**West African Bioethics**





## CLOSING REMARKS

Thank you for taking your time to read this issue of the newsletter, your comments about the current issue, and ideas for the next issue are what will keep the Center for Bioethics and Research Newsletter an interesting and lively newsletter.

Please send contributions and suggestions to **[admin@bioethicscenter.net](mailto:admin@bioethicscenter.net)**

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