

BIOETHICS & HUMANITIES NEWSLETTER



WELCOME...

Welcome to the monthly Bioethics and Humanities Newsletter provided by the Program in Bioethics and Humanities at the University of Iowa Carver College of Medicine.

Program in Bioethics and Humanities:

Our Mission

We are committed to helping healthcare professionals explore and understand the increasingly complex ethical questions that have been brought on by advances in medical technology and the health care system. We achieve this through education, research, and service within the Carver College of Medicine, University of Iowa Health Care, University of Iowa, and the wider Iowa community.

[More Details About
The Program](#)

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PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT

ETHICS SUMMER RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP

FOR CCOM MEDICAL STUDENTS

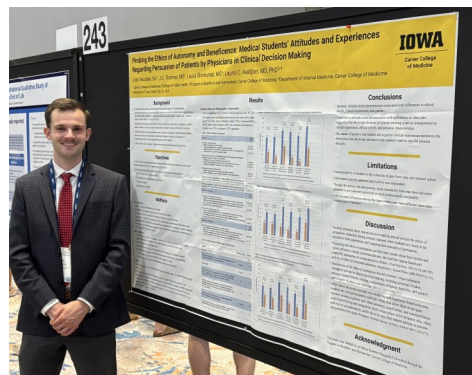
Sponsored by the Carver College of Medicine's (CCOM) Program in Bioethics and Humanities, the **Ethics Summer Research Fellowship** is a research and learning opportunity designed for 1 or 2 CCOM medical students each year who have a significant interest in medical ethics.

The Fellowship lasts 10 weeks during the summer between the M1 and M2 years and is supported by a \$5000 stipend. The **primary goal** of the Fellowship is to offer students the opportunity to work on campus with a faculty mentor at the University of Iowa to investigate a medical ethical question; **secondary goals** of the Fellowship are to allow students to learn from bioethics faculty members and observe clinical ethics activities at UIHC.

For more information about the Ethics Summer Research Fellowship, [click here](#).

We had two recipients of the Ethics Summer Research Fellowship in 2024, John Muckler (M2 student) and Elizabeth Callahan (M2 student).

John Muckler worked with mentor Dr. Lauris Kaldjian (Professor in Internal Medicine and Director of the Program in Bioethics and Humanities) on a survey of medical students about the use of persuasion by physicians in shared decision making with patients. He recently presented this work as a poster at the Society for General Internal Medicine annual meeting.



20th Annual Academic Surgical Congress



"Surgery was a Rotation that I Dreaded:" Medical Student Perceptions of Surgeons

Elizabeth Callahan, Laura Shinkunas, Erica M. Carlisle
University of Iowa Health Care, Department of Surgery

www.academicsurgicalcongress.org

Elizabeth Callahan worked with mentor Dr. Erica Carlisle (Associate Professor in Pediatric Surgery and Affiliate Faculty in the Program in Bioethics and Humanities) on a retrospective qualitative review analyzing medical student's perceptions of surgeons. Her abstract highlighting this work was recently accepted for an eight-minute oral presentation at the Academic Surgical Congress annual meeting.

Congratulations to both John and Elizabeth!

PUBLICATION HIGHLIGHT

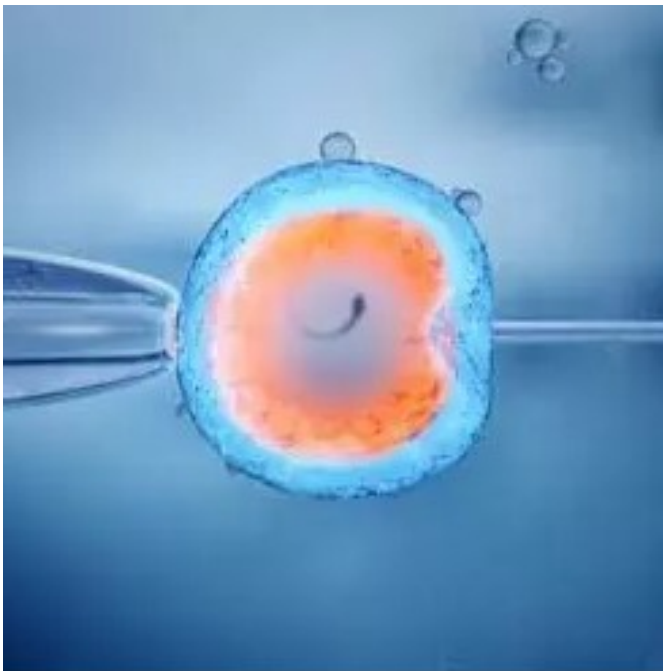
Pediatric Predictive Testing to Inform Preimplantation Genetic Testing: A Case Report and Review of the Literature

Kendra L. Schaa, Renata Thoeny, Rebecca J. Benson, Graeme J. Pitcher,
Shelby Romoser, Alpa Sidhu

[Journal of Genetic Counseling](#)

Clinical genetic testing is rapidly expanding in reproductive, pediatric, and adult specialties. We report the case of a couple's request for pediatric genetic testing for a familial Lynch syndrome pathogenic variant, with the goal of utilizing this information to perform preimplantation genetic testing (PGT) on cryopreserved embryos. We outline existing professional guidelines related to genetic testing of embryos and minors for adult-onset conditions. By highlighting conflicting perspectives from various interested parties, the significant ethical ambiguity in pediatric predictive genetic testing is underscored. This case exemplifies the value of a multidisciplinary team approach and shared decision-making model to guide parental requests for predictive genetic testing of a minor for the purpose of PGT.

To read the full article, [click here](#).



HUMANITIES CORNER



This month's spotlight is on **Spencer Dempewolf, a fourth year medical student**. His creative work is a haiku and a written reflection. He completed this creative work as part of the *Ethics and Humanities Sub-Internship Seminar*. During this Seminar students are asked to complete a written reflection or creative work that responds to a situation they encountered during their sub-internship that illustrated values in ethics, professionalism, or humanism.

Reference Ranges : A Haiku

I hope when I'm ill
I'm assessed as a person
Rather than numbers

On more than one occasion this rotation I've had to take a step back when pre-rounding on a patient and force myself to think about a patient beyond just the numbers available in their chart. We have more data available to use than any generation of physicians in history. When we round every morning, a lot of what we talk about is numbers. It can be easy to get caught up in the electrolyte levels, cell counts, ejection fractions, urine outputs, and hour-by-hour blood pressure measurements available to us. Sometimes I feel myself getting lost in these numbers and forgetting that I'm treating a fellow human as well. It can be easy to spend so much time reviewing medication records from a decade prior that we don't spend enough time holding the patient's hand at bedside. There are times when treating a number isn't as impactful as taking the time to provide spiritual or emotional healing by speaking to the patient and family. As my grandmother told me as she was fighting metastatic lung cancer, "there is nothing more physically healing than a doctor's touch."

I feel like generalists in particular are impacted by this. Open CareEverywhere of a medically complex patient and there may be thousands of documents available to view. There is only a finite amount of time every day to dedicate to each individual patient on the floor. It is a skill to be able to find the data important to the current care plan, interpret this information, and place it into the context of the patient's current presentation. An even more advanced skill it to be able to do this efficiently enough to still be able to spend time with the patient, learning about what's most important to them and what being healed would mean to them. An even more advanced skill is being able to do this efficiently enough to still be able to spend time with the patient, learning about what's most important to them and what healing means for them.

BIOETHICS RESOURCE OF THE MONTH

THE GLOBAL FLOURISHING STUDY

[The Global Flourishing Study](#) is a collaboration among researchers at the Human Flourishing Program at Harvard, Baylor University's Institute for Studies of Religion and Gallup. This research initiative aims to deepen our understanding of one of humanity's enduring questions: *WHAT CONTRIBUTES TO A LIFE WELL-LIVED?* At the core of this study is the concept of **flourishing** — “the relative attainment of a state in which all aspects of a person's life are good, including the contexts in which that person lives.” This holistic view of wellbeing acknowledges that a well-lived life is more than just health or happiness — it is a rich interplay of multiple life dimensions.

To capture the complexity of this dynamic, the Global Flourishing Study measures flourishing across six core domains: happiness and life satisfaction, mental and physical health, meaning and purpose, character and virtue, close social relationships, and financial and material stability. The initial wave of data collection included over 207,000 participants from 22 countries and Hong Kong (S.A.R. of China), representing a broad range of geographic regions, cultural backgrounds and economic development levels.

To read the Global Flourishing Study report, [click here](#).



BIOETHICS IN THE LITERATURE

- ⇒ Andrist E, Meadow J, Lawal N, et al. Cracking the code of the slow code: A taxonomy of slow code practices and their clinical and ethical implications. [Bioethics](#). 2025; 39: 309-317.
- ⇒ Barnhoorn-Bos AM, Mulder EA, Nooteboom LA, et al. Professionals' and families' perspectives on essential elements of shared decision-making: A qualitative analysis on families with multiple and enduring problems in integrated youth care. [Adm Policy Ment Health](#). 2025 Apr 30. [Epub ahead of print].
- ⇒ Charnysh E, Hendy K, Ryan K, et al. Workplace perk or pitfall? A qualitative study of genetic counselors' perspectives and experiences with workplace genetic testing. [J Genet Couns](#). 2025; 34: e70016.
- ⇒ Crowley R, Hilden D, Silberger JR. Empowering physicians through collective action: A position paper from the American College of Physicians. [Ann Intern Med](#). 2025 Apr 29. [Epub ahead of print].

“Physicians who want to engage in collective empowerment for better patient care and physician well-being have a range of options, including working through internal physician staff organizations, public protests, advocacy through professional societies like the ACP, and collective bargaining activities.”

(Crowley et al.)

- ⇒ Kay C, Scholcoff C. The erosion of professionalism or a new norm. [J Gen Intern Med](#). 2025; 40: 1430-1431.

“The attention on wellness is long overdue. After all, personal wellness is part of professionalism. But it is not the only part. Understanding all of the principles of professionalism and how to professionally address wellness may be reasonable starting points. Alternatively, some might assert that the focus should shift back towards the other professionalism standards, such as character and integrity....”

(Kay and Scholcoff)

- ⇒ Landon BE, Fazio SB, Cluett JL, et al. Death by a thousand cuts - the crushing weight of nonclinical demands in primary care. [N Engl J Med](#). 2025; 392: 1771-1773.

“... being the EHR administrator-in-chief can involve mind-numbing amounts of data entry. In-visit documentation requirements can leave PCPs feeling more like data-entry clerks than doctors and unable to prioritize the needs of the patient in front of them. The asynchronous patient contact facilitated by the EHR further exacerbates this problem. Although all physicians receive direct requests submitted on patient portals, PCPs spend substantially more time on inbox management and administrative tasks than specialists.”

(Landon et al.)

BIOETHICS IN THE LITERATURE (CONTINUED)

- ⇒ Lou Y, Zang E, Li Q. Explaining racial and ethnic disparities in advance care planning: A decomposition analysis. [J Pain Symptom Manage](#). 2025; 69: 527-535.e510.
- ⇒ Magnusson E. Disability, relational equality, and the expressivist objection. [Hastings Cent Rep](#). 2025; 55: 15-25.
- ⇒ Markwalter DW, Kennedy S. Capacity and surrogate decision-making in the emergency department. [Emerg Med Clin North Am](#). 2025; 43: 317-329.
- ⇒ Mongkolrattanakul P, Chienwichai K. Effectiveness of a shared decision-making program in reducing unplanned dialysis in advanced chronic kidney disease: A retrospective cohort study. [BMC Nephrol](#). 2025; 26: 224.
- ⇒ Muramatsu E, Takahashi N, Aomatsu M, et al. Coordinated empathy in attending general practitioners: An interpretive phenomenological approach to constructing a conceptual model of empathy. [BMC Prim Care](#). 2025; 26: 130.
- ⇒ Pacia DM, Baban SS, Fletcher FE, et al. A survey of attitudes toward social justice obligations in the field of bioethics. [AJOB Empir Bioeth](#). 2025.20250417. 1-12.
- ⇒ Rosa WE, Scout NFN, Tanguay J, et al. The role of affirming language. [JAMA](#). 2025 May 12. [Epub ahead of print].
- ⇒ Schwarze ML, Taylor LJ, Arnold RM, et al. Innovations in surgical communication 5-when surgery is a bad idea, focus on the goals. [JAMA Surg](#). 2025 May 7. [Epub ahead of print].
- ⇒ Sergeant A. The problem of value change: Should advance directives hold moral authority for persons living with dementia? [Bioethics](#). 2025; 39: 381-388.
- ⇒ Stott A, Madelli EO, Boughtwood T, et al. Health professionals contacting patients' relatives directly about genetic risk (with patient consent): Current clinical practice and perspectives. [Eur J Hum Genet](#). 2025; 33: 476-484.
- ⇒ Succi MD, Chang BS, Rao AS. Building the AI-enabled medical school of the future. [JAMA](#). 2025; 333: 1665-1666.
- ⇒ van Rijssel TI, van Thiel G, Gardarsdottir H, et al. Which benefits can justify risks in research? [Am J Bioeth](#). 2025; 25: 65-75.
- ⇒ Verbeke K, Krawczyk T, Baeyens D, et al. What's in a lie? How researchers judge the justifiability of deception. [Ethics Hum Res](#). 2025; 47: 13-29.
- ⇒ Vermeire K, Wadman E, Steber H, et al. Genetic counselors providing care to inpatients experience moral distress. [J Genet Couns](#). 2025; 34: e70017.
- ⇒ Watson K. Rethinking the ethical and legal relationship between IVF and abortion. [JAMA](#). 2025 May 22. [Epub ahead of print].



BIOETHICS IN THE NEWS

- ⇒ Women in medicine are held back by gendered ageism. [STAT News](#), May 28, 2025.
- ⇒ Regulating AI seems like an impossible task, but ethically and economically, it's a vital one. [The Conversation](#), May 27, 2025.
- ⇒ Texas doctor who filed \$118 million in fraudulent medical claims gets 10 years in prison. [The New York Times](#), May 25, 2025.
- ⇒ What is 'dying with dignity'? [The New York Times](#), May 24, 2025.
- ⇒ A brain-dead woman's pregnancy raises questions about Georgia's abortion law. [NPR](#), May 21, 2025.
- ⇒ Brain-dead pregnant woman's case spurs questions about medical consent. [The Washington Post](#), May 19, 2025.
- ⇒ Inside the I.V.F. deliberations at the White House as key report draws near. [The New York Times](#), May 17, 2025.
- ⇒ When a vaccine safety trial becomes unethical. [The New York Times](#), May 16, 2025.
- ⇒ Prisons routinely ignore guidelines on dying inmates' end-of-life choices. [KFF Health News](#), May 15, 2025.
- ⇒ There are ways to die with dignity, but not like this. [The New York Times](#), May 11, 2025.
- ⇒ Science requires ethical oversight—without federal dollars, society's health and safety are at risk. [The Conversation](#), May 9, 2025.
- ⇒ Migrants are skipping medical care, fearing ICE, doctors say. [The New York Times](#), May 8, 2025.
- ⇒ Philip Sunshine, 94, dies; pioneer in treatment of premature babies. [The New York Times](#), May 6, 2025.
- ⇒ Daniel Kahneman's decision: A debate about choice in dying. [The New York Times](#), May 4, 2025.
- ⇒ Health care for transgender children questioned in 400-page Trump administration report. [NPR](#), May 2, 2025.
- ⇒ Medical journals hit with threatening letters from Justice Department. [NPR](#), May 2, 2025.



BIOETHICS OPPORTUNITIES

ONGOING

- ⇒ American Journal of Bioethics: [YouTube channel](#) containing previous webinars
- ⇒ Children's Mercy Kansas City: [Pediatric Ethics Podcast series](#)
- ⇒ Consortium on Law and Values in Health, Environment & the Life Sciences: [Events](#)
- ⇒ The Hastings Center: [Webinars](#) and [Events](#)
- ⇒ [Health Ethics](#) podcast with host Bryan Pilkington, PhD (Hackensack Meridian School of Medicine): Find on Google Podcasts, Spotify, Apple Podcasts, and Audible.
- ⇒ The MacLean Center for Clinical Medical Ethics: [YouTube channel](#) containing previous lectures
- ⇒ Michigan State University Center for Bioethics and Social Justice: [Recorded Webinars](#)
- ⇒ Office for Human Research Protections [Luminaries Lecture Series](#)
- ⇒ University of Minnesota Center for Bioethics: [Events](#)

BIOETHICS SERVICES AT THE UIHC

ETHICS CONSULT SERVICE

This service is a clinical resource for UI Health Care personnel who would like help addressing an ethical question or problem related to a patient's care. Consults can be ordered through EPIC or by paging the ethics consultant on call. For more information, [click here](#).



CLINICAL RESEARCH ETHICS SERVICE

We provide free consultation on ethical issues related to research design, tissue banking, genetic research results, informed consent, and working with vulnerable patient populations. In particular, we assist clinical investigators in identifying and addressing the ethical challenges that frequently arise when designing or conducting research with human subjects. These include ethical challenges in sampling design; randomized and placebo-controlled studies; participant recruitment and informed consent; return of individual-level research results; community engagement processes; and more. For more information, [click here](#).