Reviewer's report

Title: Democracy: The Forgotten Challenge for Bioethics in the Developing Countries

Version: 1 Date: 26 February 2009

Reviewer: Derrick Aarons

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MAJOR COMPULSORY REVISIONS:

1. Page 2, 3rd paragraph - The author needs to give some substantive examples of how "Bioethics" and "politics" inter-relate, interact, and influence each other.

2. Page 2, 4th paragraph - in the 1st sentence - "..health is a right for people that their governments are striving to set.." - should be re-written to improve clarity, as well as to relate the statement to references stipulating "health as a right" and the WHO statement in regards to health.

3. Page 3, 3rd paragraph - "bioethics is away from political coercion as long as it is away from the areas of democracy.." What does this mean? Does the author mean that bioethics and its practice will not be subjected to political coercion in states that have democratically elected governments? He needs to re-write/clarify, as well as expand this paragraph to elucidate his conclusion.

MINOR ESSENTIAL REVISIONS:

The following suggestions are made to either improve clarity, correct mistakes, or for the author to provide expansion on specific ideas.

Page 1:

1. "Bioethics and politics" - 2nd paragraph: "Firstly, it witnessed.." The author should re-phrase to start the paragraph with a noun, instead of a pronoun ("it").

2. 2nd paragraph, line 2 - "This led, at one hand.." Correct to "..This led, 'on' one hand..

3. 2nd paragraph, line 3 - insert the word "it" - "it expanded the mandate.."

4. 2nd paragraph, last sentence - The tense used here should all be past tense as the author is describing what took place in previous decades (e.g. ...'was characterized by...which made it..')

Page 2:

1. 2nd paragraph, 2nd line - I suggest change "..is coming.." to '..comes..'

2. 2nd paragraph, line 4 - Change "Moreover,.." to 'Further, ..'

3. 2nd paragraph, line 5 - change "jucidiary" to 'judicial'
4. 2nd paragraph, line 6 - correct spelling from "resoaning" to "reasoning"
5. 2nd paragraph, line 7 - delete "jucidual judgmentets" and improve the clarity of the sentence by re-writing, perhaps as "..or contrarily can produce ethical guidance through its promotion of moral reasoning and public engagement"
6. 2nd paragraph, line 7 - correct "graown" to "grown"
7. 3rd paragraph, line 3 - insert "the" - "Moreover, 'the' practice of bioethics.."
8. 4th paragraph, line 4 - The second half of the sentence "..which stemmed from.." is confusing and should be re-written to improve clarity.
9. 4th paragraph, last sentence - The author needs to expand on this sentence to clarify in what ways these factors play differing roles in developed and less developed countries.
10. 5th paragraph - all three sentences here need to be re-written to improve their clarity and cohesion
11. 6th paragraph, line 1 - delete the word "the" (twice) and perhaps re-write as follows: "Moreover, clinical practice is highly affected by political systems in many ways"

Page 3:
1. 1st paragraph, line 2 - delete "..long list of.." and re-phrase as "..characterized by ..political-like attitudes such as paternalism,.."
2. 1st paragraph, line 6 - "..with the least involvement.." - something is missing here - least involvement of whom?
3. 1st paragraph, line 7 - insert "is" - (..as much as 'is' needed..)
4. 2nd paragraph, line 2 - correct to state "..from 'one' country to another.."
5. 2nd paragraph, line 5 - insert the word "any" (..far from 'any' real..)
6. 2nd paragraph, line 8 - correct spelling "non-threatening"
7. 3rd paragraph, line 1 - delete "In conclusion" as this is stated at the end of the last page (4).
8. 5th paragraph, 2nd sentence - The author needs to re-write and explain what he means by this sentence
9. Page 3 - "The way forward" - 1st sentence - change "..the way we used to practice" to 'the way we practice medicine'.
10. 2nd sentence - change "no way we can develop.." to 'We cannot develop..' 

Page 4:
1. 1st paragraph, line 3 - add 's' to make the word "settings"
2. 1st paragraph, line 4 - instead of using the pronoun "it", say 'Bioethics is better started..' 
3. 2nd paragraph, line 4 - insert 'a' i.e. "..bioethics, etc, as 'a' response to.."
4. 2nd paragraph, line 5 - delete the words "being" and "with" for the sentence to
read ".. by not contradicting religion"

5. 3rd paragraph, line 1 - delete the first "to" - so sentence will read "..care is needed not to present.."

6. 3rd paragraph, line 2 - delete "with" - so sentence will read "..all those who had degrees.."

7. 4th paragraph, line 2 - delete "..it overlooked.." and insert "..these authors overlooked.." Line 3 - change the words "..on their structure and function" to '..on the structure and function of research ethics in these countries'

References:

1. Reference # 3 - The author needs to write the name of the author who wrote the chapter "Religious and cultural perspectives in bioethics" in the book that was edited by P. Singer and A. Viens

2. The title and names of persons written in 'capital'/upper case letters should be corrected to lower case letters (references # 4 & 6).

8.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.