Author's response to reviews

Title: Taking Tissue Seriously Means Taking Communities Seriously

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Author's response to reviews: see over
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Dr. Lolu da Silva
Assistant Editor, BioMedCentral Series Journals

Dear Dr. da Silva,

Re: Manuscript #4079512421492905
“Taking Tissue Seriously Means Taking Communities Seriously”
Ross E.G. Upshur, James V. Lavery, and Paulina O. Tindana

We are delighted to be informed that our manuscript is accepted in principle for publication in BioMedCentral Medical Ethics. We are also exceptionally grateful to both peer reviewers who, despite finding fault with some of our arguments, have recommended only minor revisions. However, as noted you have granted us the opportunity to improve our manuscript in light of the comments made by the reviewers and in this letter I will outline the changes that we have made to improve our manuscript. Changes made in the manuscript are highlighted in yellow.

Referee #1 – Donna Dickenson

We thank Donna Dickenson for her insightful comments. We have taken up her two recommendations for discretionary revisions in light of her suggestions. We are thankful to her for bringing the relevance of the Greenberg case to our arguments and we have appended a brief discussion on this issue in our revised manuscript. We have added a reference from JAMA that discusses this case. As well, the points made about the DNA affair in France are germane to this discussion in showing that there is a national concern for the identity in genomes in the developed world we have included a reference to this discussion, with respect to the issues raised in the Icelandic genetic data base debate which are relevant here. Thirdly, we hope we have given a little more nuance to the distinction between the way things are treated in the developed world and developing countries. Our goal was not to argue for asymmetry but actually to argue for more or less commonality on these issues. We thank Donna Dickenson for her comments which we believe have greatly improved the manuscript.

Referee #2 – Edward van Veen

With respect to Referee #2, we thank Mr. van Veen for his close and careful reading. He has not, again, recommended any major compulsory revisions but does ask us to reflect a little more on the issue of tissue ownership and the concept of anti-commons. We also thank him for bringing to our attention the work of Bovenberg which is most insightful and relevant to our reflections. In terms of minor essential revisions, we have updated the references as suggested. In terms of the discretionary revisions Mr. van
Veen raises several important issues in a broad discussion and reflection. I believe these are important issues, but not easily resolved in the scope of this paper. The Emanuel framework does cover the two principles raised by Mr van Veen, and so are latent in our analysis. It is of note that Mr. van Veen raises the issue of solidarity. Subsequent to this paper we have been exploring this issue in more detail with respect to exported tissues. Though we have some difference of interpretation, we would disagree that our orientation is fundamentally one of the western world but this, again, is a debate that, as he mentions, will not be resolved in our paper.

Once again, we thank the journal for considering our paper and for giving us an opportunity to revise it, and we thank Edward van Veen and Donna Dickenson for their insightful and supportive comments. We look forward to further correspondence on publication of this paper at your earliest convenience.

Sincere best wishes,

Ross Upshur
for James Lavery and Paulina Tindana

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