**UNDERSTANDING “BIOETHICS” AS A BRANCH OF MEDICAL SCIENCE**

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Bioethics is concerned with questions about basic human values such as the rights to life and health, and the rightness or wrongness of certain developments in healthcare institutions, life technology, medicine, health professions and about society's responsibility for the life and health of its members.

The term Bioethics was coined in 1926 by Fritz Jahr, who "anticipated many of the arguments and discussions now current in biological research involving animals". In 1970, the American biochemist Van Rensselaer Potter also used the term with a broader meaning including solidarity towards the biosphere, thus generating a "global ethics," a discipline representing a link between biology, ecology, medicine and human values in order to attain the survival of both human beings and other animal species. Medical ethics tends to be understood narrowly as an applied professional ethics, whereas bioethics appears to have worked more expansive concerns, touching upon the philosophy of science and issues of biotechnology. Still, the two fields often overlap and the distinction is more a matter of style than professional consensus.

The goals of bioethics:

– bioethics involves issues relating to the beginning and end of human life, all the way from issues relating to in-vitro fertilisation and abortion to euthanasia and palliative care;

– bioethics has an impact on every level of human community from the local nursing home to the huge international conferences on issues like the Human Genome;

– bioethics is a branch of "applied ethics" and requires the expertise of people working in a wide range disciplines including: law, philosophy, theology, medicine, the life sciences, nursing and social science;

– bioethics is full of difficult ethical questions for everybody: families, hospitals, governments and civilisation;

– fundamental values are at stake: human life, the dignity of the frail and elderly, just healthcare, bodily integrity and the ability to make reasonable decisions.

One of the main principles addressed by modern bioethicists was that of human experimentation. Deliberate infection of people with deadly or debilitating diseases, exposure of people to biological and chemical weapons, human radiation experiments, injection of people with toxic and radioactive chemicals, surgical experiments, interrogation and torture experiments, tests involving mind-altering substances, and a wide variety of others. Many of these tests were performed on children, the sick, and mentally disabled individuals, often under the guise of "medical treatment". In many of the studies, a large portion of the subjects were poor, racial minorities or prisoners. The human research programs were usually highly secretive, and in many cases information about them was not released until many years after the studies had been performed. The ethical, professional, and legal implications of this medical and scientific community were quite significant, and led to many institutions and policies that attempted to ensure that future human subject research in the would be ethical and legal. Public outrage in the late 20th century over the discovery of government experiments on human subjects led to numerous congressional investigations.