



Next Meeting: Wed. 4/29/09 St. John's Hospital 1328 22nd St. Santa Monica 90404 5:30 dinner 6:30 meeting ACR conference rm Ground South Park: Lot C (valet) northside Santa Monica Blvd, W of US Bank on NW corner of 23rd & S.M. bring in ticket for validation, enter under blue canopy (East entry) <http://www.stjohns.org/paul.schneider@va.gov>

Agenda: POLST update with J. Citko & M.Apfe

///////Bzzzzzz: *conversations on the web*

**What is appropriate in this situation?**

A survey was taken in late January regarding the appropriated disposition for an unresponsive 56yr old homeless patient who had a poor prognosis. There were three care options: #1 continue the aggressive, albeit, ineffective, care, #2 write DNR order and transfer the patient to a skilled-nursing facility, #3 withdraw life support on the basis of substituted judgment. Cultural and geographic differences were noted. Many chose #3.

<http://content.nejm.org/cgi/reprint/360/10/e15.pdf>

**Slow Reasoning Movement**

USC researchers have determined that the part of our brains most utilized for quick decision making and cultivated by video and computer gaming may not be those most helpful in areas that require measured philosophical analysis (i.e. ethical concerns?) See A. Damasio's study findings [www.usc.edu/schools/college/bci/index.html](http://www.usc.edu/schools/college/bci/index.html)

**Poetry from the trenches**

*words—once intended to encompass caring and attention-- transformed with the modern culture and technology, to suggest sometimes the impossible, even, the unworthy or unintended.*

**Cure by Veneta Masson**

In Latin it means care,  
conjures priests and temples  
the laying on of hands  
sacred pilgrimage  
sacrifice  
the sickbed  
invalid and  
solemn attendants.  
How far we have come.  
Today's English  
has neatly expunged  
these purely human elements.  
Cure is impersonal, consequential,  
unequivocal, sometimes violent--  
the annihilation  
of the thing that ails.

**\*\*\*Highlights from 1/ 21/09 meeting\*\*\***

N. Kockler reviewed the history, mission of St. Vincent's hospital. Dr.T. Horowitz, FP and chair of Bioethics Committee emphasized that their task is about the patient and not business. Consults are not accepted from case management or UR. He advocates a position free of financial interest. He also chairs County Medical Society's PAC and is a physician rep to LACARE. He advocates **community standards guiding bioethics decision.** Role of Bioethics consultations was discussed with Stuart Finder citing historical concerns regarding physician fees. Roberto Dell'Oro raised the issue of just distribution of resources. Malcolm Shaner believes **distributive justice**, at least within one's institution, is an important goal. Hornstein noted the **problem of families who demand medically inappropriate treatments.** Most agreed that economic issues cannot be ignored by framing the issues as simply an ethics matter. Ron Miller emphasized the **importance of national guidelines, especially when procedures requested will definitely, or probably not, work.** Roberto again stressed that clinical and organizational ethics are distinct despite their connection. The issues of nursing homes were discussed with members weighing in on their experiences. An invitation to experts on the subject of **how ethics issues are addressed in nursing homes** will be made for future meetings. Kaiser's policy on Public Guardian Patients DNR orders was shared. There ensued a spirited discussion of the importance of a direct role of the physician in specific POLST procedures which continued subsequently via email.

**Resource**

SCBCC website <http://www.socalbioethics.org>

.....  
This nurse  
approaching the patient  
has discarded temple garb  
for practical scrubs.  
His gloved hands  
unsheathe the magic bullet,  
shoot it through the central line  
where it locks onto the target cells.  
For the not-yet-cured,  
there is still sacred pilgrimage—  
that dogged slog  
to the high tech shrine,  
the health food store,  
the finish line of the annual race  
where, etched on each undaunted face,  
is a gritty tale of survival.

This poem appeared in Pulse—"voices from the heart of medicine" [www.pulsemagazine.org](http://www.pulsemagazine.org) N.P. Masson's poems can be found in "Clinician's Guide to the Soul" [www.sagefemmepress.com](http://www.sagefemmepress.com)

**A Wider View: Better to give than to receive?**

While some medical aid organizations believe that charging the recipients a fee may empower them, studies suggest that among the very poor, such a fee inhibits access to care, according to WHO's Commission on Macroeconomics and Health ...to say nothing of the dubious ethics of charging the impoverished for care that is donated.

[http://www.whoindia.org/LinkFiles/Commission\\_on\\_Macroeconomic\\_3\\_06.pdf](http://www.whoindia.org/LinkFiles/Commission_on_Macroeconomic_3_06.pdf) find full report at <http://www.earth.columbia.edu/sitefiles/File/about/director/pubs/CMHExecSumm112603.pdf>

**News Break: ICRC report reveals medical professionals involvement in torture**

International Committee of the Red Cross report, previously held secret, revealed the medical personnel working for the CIA monitored prisoners undergoing such stresses as water boarding, small container confinement, arm shackling to ceiling, exposure to cold and wall slamming.

While the Red Cross policy is to keep its reports to governments confidential to encourage access to prisoners, Dr Steven Miles, Center for Bioethics at the U of Minn. believes the medical role of the CIA program should be fully disclosed to deter future misconduct. M. Gregg Bloche, Georgetown U law professor who trained as a psychiatrist, noted the report's revelations to be a "disturbing confirmation of our worst fears about medical professionals' involvement in directing and modulation (of) cruel treatment and torture." <http://tinyurl.com/d2d3y9>

**Ongoing Conferences**

--Cedars Sinai weekly noon conferences  
Morse Aud. (So. Tower, Plaza level)

<http://www.csmc.edu/13954.html>

--UCLA Healthcare Ethics Center noon lectures  
Wed. Ronald Reagan Aud. Rm B -130 (lunch)  
Call Ethics Center 310 794-6219 for calendar

**In memoriam Hassan Hathout MDPH, Muslim**

Physician, ethicist, poet, cofounder of International Organization of Medical Science to disseminate religiously guided medical ethics addressing controversial issues. Cofounder of Interfaith Council of So California, he won awards from interfaith communities including the Jewish Christian Muslim Olive Branch for peace making efforts. His books include, *The Spirit of Red Cross in the Teaching of Islam* and *The Humane Physician*. He is mourned after 84 years of life and many of service. LA Times 4/27/09, KPCC 4/28/09

**Weigh in with the Editor**

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**AMERICA'S "WOE" GRADE  
IN MENTAL HEALTH**

National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI) issued a report card designed to assess how services for the mentally ill, including outpatient facilities, are functioning. They found only a handful of states effectively implement laws that could protect patients and society from noncompliance with effective treatment; Iowa, N.Y., N.C. and Wisconsin being the most notable.

Despite the fact that high profile states such as CA, NY, PA, and WA, as well as 38 others have passed laws authorizing involuntary assisted outpatient treatment, very few of those states managed to use the laws on a regular basis. The effectiveness of the implication of "Kendra's Law" in NY where "an involuntary assisted outpatient treatment resulting in fewer hospitalizations and arrest." is contrasted with California's Laura's Law, a court ordered outpatient treatment that is rarely used and thus has had little impact on "revolving door issues with homelessness, hospitalization and the criminal justice system." Given the economic calamities the country is facing at this time, it was no surprise that CA received a D in the NAMI 'Grading the States' 2009 report card.

[www.treatmentadvocacycenter.org](http://www.treatmentadvocacycenter.org)

**Local Educational Opportunities**

Loyal Marymount Bioethics

Survey course: 22 hours CME Cat I, Tu eves, fall  
Certificate: starts in fall 09

Masters

<http://bellarmine.lmu.edu/bioethics.htm>