

Overview

Reseña

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Ruiz de Chávez, Manuel. Jiménez Piña, Raúl (coordinators).
Bioethics and New Frontiers of Genetics. Publishing House Fontamara.
National Commission on Bioethics, Mexico, 2018, pp. 99.

The book gathers the presentations that were performed at the “Symposium on Bioethics and New Frontiers of Bioethics” of July 2017, organized by the National Medicine Academy and the National Commission on Bioethics. The book consists of 6 presentations preceded by a presentation and a foreword.

The first paper “Bioethical challenges about the assisted human reproduction” (pp.19-26), by Dr. Ruiz de Chávez, who presents the ethical challenges of these procedures, as well as the role played by the National Commission of Bioethics in the diffusion and discussion of these issues. It is presented as an example, the mitochondrial substitution technique that was performed in Mexico that generated an ethical debate regarding the regulations of such practices in Mexico. At the same time, the guidelines set and the activities of the National Bioethics Commission on assisted reproduction issues were enlisted.

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Dr. Penchaszadeh in his paper “Ethics of research in human genetics”, analyzes from different angles, the ethics of genetics such as: the genetic reductionism, the discrimination and stigmatization, the handling of genetic basis, the handling of genetic samples and the research on germ cells and human embryos. As the author points out: «... the investigations confront special ethical dilemmas, to a large extent due to the particular meaning of the genetic material....For its permanent character in people, for being a part itself of the identity of people, for being an identifier of ethnic origin, for being transmitted hereditarily, for informing about the affiliation of people, and for indicating possible genetic predispositions to certain illnesses» (p.30).

Dr. Lizbeth Sagols in her «Ethical implications in the generic handling for the prevention of illnesses» (pp.43-52) analyzes some ethical elements in the nuclear transfer, the technology on pluripotent somatic cells, technologies for the prevention as the replacement of the mitochondrial genome and the technology of the genome edition.

One of those problems is the generation of life that, later has to be destroyed to save others. The author summarizes it very well: “... bioethics has been divided into two positions: the ones that think that what is human in our being, is there since the first cell, and those who think what the human, although it is given in the initial genome... runs through different modes of being and transformations through, it is being shaped a modality of human being structured in a complex manner, by its biochemical components due to the interaction with the environment, and for the time passing by” (pp.46-47). The ontology of the embryo leads us to analyze the assumptions or principles from which we start. The author defends the indicated second posture, considering that the abstract principles cannot be on top of the concrete deliberation. Later on indicates some ethical criteria of action such as the principle of precaution, the principle of proportionality, avoiding discrimination, the possible economic interests over the therapeutic, among others.

In “An approach to the problem of obesity and diabetes from genetics and bioethics” (pp.53-65), Eduardo García García analyzes the interrelationship of obesity and diabetes and discusses the scope of the “predictive” genetic tests of those illnesses. The core element of the article, is to insist in the essential relationship with the environmental factors in order to obesity and/or diabetes be produced. Questions are raised on the ethicality of the predictive genetic studies of obesity and diabetes.

In the paper “The ethic limits of genetics from the perspective of the Oviedo convention” (pp.67-84), Garbiñe Saruwatari Zavala studies the ethical and legal interrelationships of documents such as “An Agreement for the Protection of Human Rights and the Dignity of the Human being, regarding Biology and Biomedicine Applications”, “The Universal Declaration of the Human Genome” and others. In a detailed study about the papers, comparing them in a way to be able to have a perspective of the scopes of the legal documents. Without a doubt, this is one of the best papers in the book as far as data precision and no waste of the argumentation. The article sets a relationship, at a second time, Mexico’s Legislation with respect to what has been analyzed in the agreements and International Treaties: The Constitution, with the General Law on Health and Regulations. It is interesting to highlight the proposal of the National Institute of Genomic Medicine of the Decalogue about the Rights of a Person with respect to their biological sample and their genetic information: “...in order for people who are going to participate in a research protocol, and the ones who go to a diagnostics laboratory for getting a test, could know what are their rights, and thus forging a genomic culture” (p.82).

The last paper is “Ethical challenges of the Big Data on health” by Víctor Penchaszadeh (pp. 85-93). The paper analyzes how digitalized data of people, the Big Data, present ethical problems to the informed consent, privacy and confidentiality of the data, justice and equality problems, the possible discrimination drawn from the information, the control of generated and saved data.

The book updates the bioethics issues regarding the genome, highlighting traditional problems of bioethics, such as the ontological statute of the embryo, up to new technologies about the genome edition, which sets new questions and challenges. The book is excellent in order to pinpoint where a great deal of today's discussions on these issues are located. Coincidences are found in several subjects analyzed by the authors, being one of them, the no discrimination for genetic causes, either by denying medical services, as well as the selection of gender among others.