

## INTRODUCTION

The rapidly changing global scenarios and geopolitical relations, together with the still present global crisis resulting from the pandemic caused by COVID-19, demonstrate, once again, that human beings are fragile and vulnerable.

At the dawn of the war between Russia and Ukraine, which has left millions of people displaced, increased the number of migrants in the world, added alarming numbers of deaths and has given indications of a possible use of nuclear weapons that represent a threat of great dimensions. We continue to think, with more urgency than before, how and from where to open new paths for dialogue and for ethical and bioethical action in the face of human life.

In this context, this issue presents a variety of topics, some of which are of long standing, but which are still outside the bioethical debate, and which attempt to provide reflections to guide the search for ways to achieve equal recognition of human dignity in all circumstances as a cornerstone of world peace.

The first article, «Ukrainian nuclear power plants in danger of being used as weapons of bioterrorism», by Dominique Monlezun *et al.* provides a thorough and thoughtful analysis of the real threat of a bioterrorist attack that could be triggered by the Russian invasion and attacks on Ukrainian nuclear power plants. Unique in its type and methodology, the analysis makes use of artificial intelligence to build a mathematical model that quantifies the costs in human lives and infrastructure losses, as well as the ecological costs in case the threat were real and the devastating scenario of a nuclear attack were to come true. In this way, it presents the hypothesis that a prompt and effective end to the war between Russia and Ukraine is not only convenient for the immediate effects of

## Introduction

---

the ceasefire, but also desirable as a mechanism to protect people's right to health and life.

The second article, «Bioethics and integral ecology: the role of universities in the care of the common home», by Martha Sofía Solís Jonapá, takes up the notion of a socially responsible university to complement it with the necessary vision, transmission and experience of an «integral ecology» within it. To this end, she takes this term from Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato si'*, in which the focus is not only environmental, but also social, which points to a necessary interconnection between the human person and his or her environment, and leads the former to care for the latter, as it represents their common home and even their survival.

This approach, says the author, must be incorporated and lived in a transversal manner in all areas of the university, namely in the organizational, educational, social, knowledge and research areas. This requires commitment, continuous diagnosis, the implementation of continuous improvement actions, as well as clear reporting to all stakeholders involved. When this is achieved, the author points out, the result is reflected in good governance, as well as in an adequate management of social and environmental impacts, in addition to a fluid dialogue with stakeholders and strengthening institutional alliances. In this way, the university becomes an engine of social transformation by promoting a culture of social responsibility and bioethics.

The third article, «Citizens' initiative *versus* decriminalization of abortion», by Martha Leticia Barba, Francisco Javier Aznar and Carlos Andrés Mesa, takes up a fundamental bioethical issue, which is the decriminalization of abortion, and conducts a study on the perception of the inhabitants of Aguascalientes, Mexico, on the decriminalization of this practice. After analyzing the biological, scientific, philosophical, anthropological and ethical premises regarding the human status of the embryo, the authors share the results of their study. The study yields three main conclusions:

1) that the majority of the inhabitants of this Mexican state over 15 years of age affirm and accept that human life begins from the moment of fertilization; 2) that the unborn child is a subject of rights, and 3) that its life must be protected, rejecting the decriminalization of abortion.

This article provides an opportunity to reflect critically on whether the decriminalization of this practice is part of the common feeling of ordinary citizens, or if it is part of pending guidelines and agendas, that impose false beliefs.

The fourth article, «Some problems of conscientious objection», by Francisco Javier Marcó Bach, offers a very complete, accurate and pertinent overview of conscientious objection. The author, after making a brief journey through history and presenting examples in which this resource has been used, states that conscientious objection is only possible in those societies in which individual autonomy is privileged. Since it arises from the perception of a conflict of values between what is marked and required by law, and the individual conscience of each person, who has a hierarchy of moral values that dictate their actions.

The article makes a very pertinent distinction between the terms legality and legitimacy. While the former refers to form and compliance with requirements, the latter points to content and its virtues, so that the ground on which conscientious objection rests is that of legitimacy, not legality. In this way, conscientious objection defends the integrity of the objecting person against a law that imposes a mandate contrary to his moral convictions.

The author also provides other distinctive characteristics of conscientious objection that highlight the need to endorse this resource, especially in areas and situations in which it seems that law and morality are often opposed. Some of these are described by the author, such as, for example, the conciliation between the right to conscientious objection of health personnel with the rights of patients, and how and when it is ethically correct to claim the right to conscientious objection.

## Introduction

---

In the fifth article, «Vaccination: between autonomy and solidarity. The balance of principles from a global bioethical perspective in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic», Sabina Girotto addresses the ethical dilemma between individual autonomy and the common good in the case of vaccination against COVID-19.

The author reflects on how this apparent contradiction can be resolved. First, not without warning that something that has considerably delayed the long awaited «herd immunity» has been, on the one hand, the growing number of anti-vaccine people who refuse to be vaccinated. On the other, the large population of countries with scarce economic resources, which have not been able to buy sufficient quantities of vaccines for the immunization of their population.

Regarding the main dilemma that usually arises, the article unmasks that there is such a dilemma, since no liberalist current would tolerate that, if necessary, individual autonomy be prioritized over the common good, as is the case of vaccination against the coronavirus pandemic.

This, Girotto argues, is best understood from the perspective of global bioethics and the principle of solidarity, where autonomy is necessarily relational and, therefore, includes responsibility as a main element. In addition, solidarity appeals to the natural sociability of the human person, so that to fail in this principle in something that affects us all equally, it is not only to affect the lives of others, but also one's own, since, as the author says: «each life is a life in common».

Finally, the reviews presented in this issue refer to current books to apply the knowledge of clinical bioethics and global bioethics.

The first, carried out by Josué Hernández on the book «Clinical bioethics: a brief introduction», by the authors Fariás Trujillo and Hall Robert, addresses clinical issues with bioethical edges that continue to be complex in their treatment, but highlights that one of the greatest virtues of the reviewed book is the explanation and deepening of these topics from clinical cases. This book is, then, a

## Introduction

novel and well-founded proposal by the authors, who have extensive experience in clinical bioethics and adapt to the Mexican reality and their particular circumstances.

The second review, prepared by Gómez Álvarez on the book «Cosmopolitan Ethics», by Adela Cortina, presents an update on this philosopher's thinking in light of the pandemic. After which it has become clear that ethics must be understood, in its essential approach, as cosmopolitan; that is, as varied and different but the same, just like humanity, with universal threads that make room for attitudes such as the «ethics of care», which invites us to see each other as equal in dignity and needs.

*Dr. María Elizabeth de los Ríos Uriarte  
Editorial Coordinator  
Anahuac University Mexico, Bioethics Faculty, Mexico  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9600-445X>*