

Debate

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Democracy: the forgotten challenge for bioethics in the developing countries

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Background

Bioethics as a field related to the health system and health service delivery has grown in the second half of the 20th century, mainly in North America. This is attributed, the author argues, to mainly three kinds of development that took place in the developed countries at a pace different than the developing countries. They are namely: development of the health system; moral development; and political development.

Discussion

This article discusses the factors that impede the development of the field of bioethics from an academic activity to a living field that is known and practiced by the people in the developing countries. They are quite many; however, the emphasis here is on role of the political structure in the developing countries and how it negatively affects the development of bioethics. It presents an argument that if bioethics is to grow within the system of health service, it should be accompanied by a parallel changes in the political mindsets in these countries.

Summary

For bioethics to flourish in developing countries, it needs an atmosphere of freedom where people can practice free moral reasoning and have full potential to take their life decisions by themselves. Moreover, bioethics could be a tool for political change through the empowerment of people, especially the vulnerable. To achieve that, the article is proposing a practical framework for facilitating the development of the field of bioethics in the developing countries.

The complete article is available as a [provisional PDF](#). The fully formatted PDF and HTML versions are in production.

