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EDITORIAL

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Culture shapes people's beliefs about health and disease and, implicitly, how they relate to the medical system as well as patterns of access and use of medical services. Therefore, knowing the cultural values of the patients is essential for creating a functional and efficient doctor-patient relationship, increasing the trust of the patients and of the population in the medical system.

The first issue of the Journal of Intercultural Management and Ethics in 2020 is dedicated to analyzing the complex interrelationships between medicine and culture from an ethical perspective, in order to highlight how culture can become an integral part of health services and the premise of therapeutic success.

This issue begins with a paper that analyzes the approach to the Coronavirus crisis, from the perspective of the values of the national culture. Huib Wursten analyzes the reactions of the countries to this crisis of public health and shows that the common denominator is the acceptance by the population of the coercion imposed by governments which, for crisis management, tend to adopt good practices implemented in other countries. But how and why the coercion is accepted by the population depends on the national cultural values, relevant being certain dimensions of culture, such as power-distance (acceptance of hierarchy) and individualism. However, regardless of the cultural particularities, for a good management of the crisis, it is essential that the leaders show transparency, so that the population understands the reasons why coercion cannot be avoided. The next challenge in this context is finding the best way to combine human rights, democratic freedom and resistance to coercion with the need for governments to implement energetic measures to limit the spread of the virus.

The following papers address different issues in the management of various pathologies, the emphasis being placed on the cultural values and ethical dimensions. The authors capture and analyze the particularities but also the common elements in the approach of the medical act through the cultural values of the actors involved, respectively the patient and the members of the medical team. Also, the need for a humanistic approach to the medical act and its placement in an appropriate ethical framework is underlined.

Cătălina Luca and the co-authors show that understanding the importance of vaccination by the population is, at least in part, the result of a cultural and psychological approach, which is why it cannot be altered only by logical and scientific arguments. Thus, interventions aimed at accepting vaccination should be tailored to the communities to which they are addressed, taking into account their culture, values and priorities.

In the next paper, Ioana Hunea and the co-authors approach the ethical and legal issues related to the off-label prescription of medicines, showing the need for a careful assessment of the risks and benefits, as well as a correct information of the patients.

In the same context, of infectious diseases, Ioana Florina Mihai and the co-authors address the ethical issues related to antibiotic resistance and show that this will be one of the greatest threats to global health in the coming years, which is why concerted actions to prevent it are considered ethical obligations.

Elena Toader introduces the idea of the importance of the patient's religion and spirituality and follows, in the context of medical ethics, how they can be integrated into the medical act.

Aspects related to spiritual and psychological support as well as the importance of effective communication between doctor and patient are discussed further in papers addressing the complex issues of palliative care at the end-of-life. Andreea Clim and the co-authors analyze the psychological aspects and mechanisms of adaptation for patients diagnosed with incurable diseases and underline the essential role of palliative care professionals in supporting the patient so that he can develop an effective coping mechanism. Nicoleta Dima, together with the co-authors, explores the difficulties of the non-resuscitation decision in palliative care and stresses the importance of patient's trust in his/her doctor and of the open and honest discussion about the risks and benefits of this medical act.

Vlad Covrig and co-authors discuss the quality of life of patients who undergo surgery for neoplasms of the face and neck, which induce important changes in their physical appearance. The authors show the importance of the careful analysis of the therapeutic benefit versus the long-term consequences of surgery, as well as the importance of the family support and of the individualized psychological counseling.

In the next paper, Mihaela Camelia Târnovanu and the co-authors analyze the ethical problems in gynecological neoplastic pathology. Based on the results of their study, the authors show that the patients want to know their diagnosis and also want to benefit from realism and honesty in communication with their doctor.

The last two papers in this issue address issues related to artificial reproductive technologies, which, although they began in the 1970s, remain at the center of ethical and legal debates due to their continuous progress. Nicoleta Tanase and Mircea Onofriescu refer in their paper to gamete donation, analyzing the issue of anonymity of the donor and that of the paid donation versus altruistic donation. The authors point out that although ethical issues will always be part of the ART field, what prevails is for the doctor to do what is right for the patient and at the same time what is right for his/her conscience. Mihaela Camelia Târnovanu and co-authors conclude this issue of the journal with a paper on ethical and legal issues of PGD diagnosis in IVF couples, pointing out that beyond the numerous ethical dilemmas associated with this revolutionary technology, PGD is a morally and legally accepted procedure for preventing transmission of a severe genetic disease in couples who use IVF for infertility reasons.

The first issue of JIME in 2020 is, therefore, an ethical and cultural journey through different medical specialties, emphasizing the importance of approaching the medical act from these perspectives, placing the patient at the center of the medical act as an autonomous and responsible person.