

## Editor in Chief's Message

The Iranian Journal of Biomedical Law and Ethics has risen out of more than two decades of research and education in a number of fields.

The first is the field of science and technology. Iran, like other developing countries, has been endeavouring to establish and develop new branches of science and technology. This endeavour has closely and complexly involved various areas of the individual and social life: from prenatal genetic testing and screening to organ transplantation of the brain dead patients, and from hard experiments on animals, endangering the environment and the human health to production of nano, transgenic and genetically modified products. Although scientific and technological efforts have brought about benefits—such as infertility treatments, cell therapy or human enhancement—they have in turn given rise to normative problems.

Secondly, and in immediate relationship with the first field, intellectual attempts have inevitably been made to solve the normative problems caused by the mentioned developments. These efforts are both for ethical analysis of the problems, in the global and local contexts of beliefs (*e.g.* explanation and analysis of filiation of children resulting from assisted reproduction technologies) and providing legally binding solutions for those cases which without such solutions would increase and make more serious the relevant controversies and risks (*e.g.* preservation of biodiversity or the necessity of biosafety vis-à-vis vast dangers of nano-biotechnological products). Therefore, the two partite field of morality and law has also evolved and developed in parallel with science and technology.

Thirdly, the field of ethics and law in turn embraces both traditional medical problems, such as abortion and confidentiality, and new problems arising out of biotechnology, such as cell therapy, cloning and production of bio-warfare and terrorism. In other words, in the present contexts, ethics and law are qualified both by the "medical" and "bio" constraints. Accordingly, four professional sub-fields of medical ethics, medical law, bio ethics and bio law have gradually taken shape.

Against this backdrop, over the last two decades, we have witnessed the emergence of professional institutes and journals in each of the mentioned sub-fields. They have tried to form and publish interdisciplinary opinions and researches on the sub-field they tended to cover. None the less, a forum for forming and publishing opinions and researches on all of the four sub-fields together has been lacking, as it is evident that understanding and resolving the aforesaid problems, without cooperation and exchange among the concerned disciplines like science, biotechnology, law and morality, are impossible. This Journal has been established to fill that gap.

Thus, the Journal of Biomedical Law and Ethics, with the awareness of distinctions between law and morality and also medical and bio sciences and with the intention of publishing interdisciplinary opinions and theories (basic sciences, medical sciences, engineering sciences, philosophy, theology, law, humanities and social sciences) wishes to lay the ground for an intellectual interaction and provide for an opportunity of putting forth applied and theoretical thoughts in the aforementioned complex and broad scope.

We intend to publish the Journal semi-annually. Also, upon publication of two issues in Persian, one issue will be allocated to English papers, god willing. We cordially invite all scholars and authors of the vast domain of biomedical law and ethics to accompany us and give us the honour of publishing their opinions and intellectual achievements.

Mohammad Rasekh