



Book Review: Biomedical Ethics

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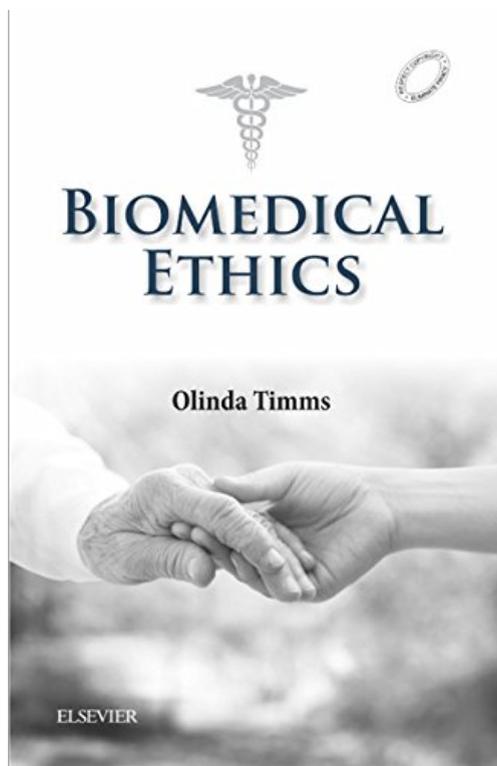
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Received: 17-SEP-2017

Accepted: 17-SEP-2017

Published Online: 01-OCT-2017



Reed Elsevier India Private Limited

2016

Paperback, 407pp.

Price: Rs. 368

Review copy provided by the publisher

With the rapid commercialization of the medical sector, the heightened awareness about human rights in the community, and the introduction of newer medical technologies, an understanding of biomedical ethics is more relevant now in India than ever before. There are very few comprehensive books on this subject

written from the Indian perspective. This book, *Biomedical Ethics* by Olinda Timms, comfortably fills this vacuum in biomedical literature. It aims to bring to the forefront and discuss the ethical issues faced in their day-to-day lives by biomedical practitioners and researchers.

Cite this article as: Khan AM. Book Review: Biomedical Ethics. RHIME. 2017;4:64-5.

I found the book to be interesting and thought-provoking right from the first sentence to the last word. Countless case studies are presented keeping in mind the Indian context; the reader is sure to find that all the dimensions that are discussed are firmly rooted in reality.

This book comprehensively and conveniently covers all facets of biomedical ethics. The topics flow smoothly from the history of ethics at an international and national level, to established ethical dilemmas related to consent and treatment, and on to recent challenges in ethics such as surrogacy, organ donation, newer genetic tests, public health and publication ethics. A special mention must be made here of the fresh and unique approach to thematically arranging the contents of the book. The updated ethics-related guidelines from the national governmental agencies in the fields of health, research, and law have been presented at relevant places in the book. The content provided by the author is evidence-based and is validated by pertinent references to published scientific research interspersed throughout the text.

The book successfully sensitizes the reader to the concept of ethics and its importance in the day-to-day decision making of those involved in medicine-related practice, research, and those who are students of medicine or its allied subjects. It doesn't attempt to pass binary judgement on a particular situation such as ethical versus unethical. I think this approach is appropriate as ethics is more about dilemmas than about more upfront managerial issues. The language is easy to understand without compromising on the importance and the complexity of

the issue.

As teaching-learning is also an integral part of biomedical practice, either in the course of health education or for students and teachers in their respective fields, it was heartening to see that some ethical issues from the students' perspective are included. I would like to see, in future editions, some space given to the ethics of teaching from the perspective of a teacher of health professionals.

Story-telling has been a proven educational technique to inculcate reflections in ethics. It was good to see a complete chapter-wise list of recommended Hindi and English movies for furthering understanding of the theme of each chapter. Being more of a book reader myself, I longed to have a list of recommended novels, too, for this purpose.

Ethical issues may arise on a daily basis, thus, it is important that the book be easy to carry about for ready availability and reference; it was good to find this book is indeed handy and of optimum size and can easily be kept in our apron pockets.

During the course of reviewing this book, I found that it is nothing less than addictive; I very often got drawn to the book whenever I encountered an ethical dilemma during this period. This book has become a must-have for me in such a short span of time.

I highly recommend 'Biomedical Ethics' to all who are involved in medicine or its allied subjects, whether as clinical practitioners or as clinical researchers, and to those who are occupied with the teaching of biomedical ethics in the Indian context.