

Islamic Code of Medical & Health Ethics: Ashah .M. Mwanga

The Holy Quran and Hadith state the guiding principle of medical ethics in Islam and is also mentioned in the Torah that; "If anyone has saved a life, it would be as if he has saved the life of the whole of mankind." But then in terms of saving lives, at what cost and what quality does this come? Does the quality of life modify our decision-making process and when resources are scarce, who takes precedence, the individual or the community? While Islam gives importance to saving life, it also makes it clear that dying is part of the contract with God and part of the journey on this planet. The final decision of the term is up to God. The quality of life is equally, if not more important than the life span on this planet.

As stated in the article; *Bioethics for clinicians: 21. Islamic bioethics in Islam*, bioethical decision-making is carried out within a framework of values derived from revelation and tradition. It is intimately linked to the broad ethical teachings of the Qur'an and the tradition of the Prophet Muhammad, and thus to the interpretation of Islamic law.

I am especially familiar with the fact that Islamic bioethics emphasizes the importance of preventing illness, but when prevention fails, it provides guidance not only to the practising physician but also to the patient. I entirely agree to the extent I have witnessed the similarity with medical doctors regardless of their religion when they advise patients to prevent sickness and in the unlikely event that one falls sick, the medics avail measures to cure the sickness. Just as Islam recommends the physician to strive to heal, medical doctors outside Islam also recommend the same.

Further, this article also showcases human rights principles of respect of that are also well stipulated in major human rights documents like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments like the ICCPR and ICESCR. This is similar to Islam in the sense that both teach respect for patients. Of course, if it is a Muslim Medical doctor, there is an added advantage since Islam preaches that the patient must be treated with respect and compassion and that the physical, mental, and spiritual dimensions of the illness experience be taken into account as stated in the article; *Bioethics for clinicians: 21. Islamic bioethics*.

The article is inspiring as it digs into the Islamic code of conduct and compares it with sickness. For example, the article states that many Muslims incorporate their religion in almost every

aspect of their lives which is a fact. They invoke the name of God in daily conversation for example when they keep greeting each other with a “peace salutation” of “Asalam Aleikum” and go ahead to live a closely examined life about the Qur’an and the traditions of the Prophet while they try to live their lives in a Muslim way as patients, even when admitted to hospital.

Reading the article; Western and Islamic Bioethics: How Close is the Gap by Hassan Chamsi-Pasha, and Mohammed Ali Albar, I understood that re-echoing was made in this article, especially regarding the intimate nature of Islam and Western Bioethics. Just like we studied under the Module of prophetic medicine, this article also clearly states the uniqueness of Islam and medicine and the fact that Islam encourages the use of science, medicine, and biotechnology as a way of solving sickness or human suffering. There is however a slight difference that I agree with as raised in this article to the effect that the use or non-use of a renowned medical treatment by Muslim doctors will sometimes be guided more by ethics derived from Islamic law than purely medical considerations.

In conclusion, the authors of the Islamic code of medical and health ethics must make recommendations that urge doctors that in addition to Islamic teachings under the Quran and Hadith, a doctor must at all times continue to perfect himself in the science and art of medicine. Continued medical education should form part of the daily curriculum of a Muslim doctor. A doctor must always be ready to teach his junior colleagues in Medicine everything he knows and must not hide any special knowledge or special technique in surgery. I agree that the Quran is self-sustaining and reliant but we need to balance Islam and the medical field, especially given the fact that Muslim doctors also treat non-Muslims who may not know Islamic code of conduct.