



Two Decades of the JBI, Where to Next?

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The journal is heading towards its twentieth anniversary later this year and plans are underway to mark this milestone. Much has changed in the academic and academic publishing world in that time and it is possible that some of the founding principles, ethos, and practice of the JBI may need review and change. We have therefore engaged in a strategic planning process to review and renew the JBI's structure, contents, and ways of working. This process was initiated by the JBI editorial group and over the past two years has involved consultation with readers, reviewers, authors, and the publisher. It has been directed by working groups comprising many members of the JBI community and had the oversight of the JBI editorial body. The following summary provides a brief overview of some of the major initiatives (see Table 1 for relevant web links).

Revised Article and Collection Types

The JBI remains true to its remit of positioning bioethics as a region of foment that welcomes contributions from many disciplines, methodologies, and contexts. At the same time, the categories of article and collection types have been reorganized to provide

greater visibility for different audiences and greater opportunities for different authors. These revisions include:

- Categorization of “Original Research” into specific domains including “Ethics,” “Research and Innovation,” “Clinical Practice,” and “Public Health, Politics, and Social Justice.”
- Expanding opportunities for “Review Articles,” to include scoping, narrative, and systematic reviews.
- Renaming “Critical Perspectives” as “Current Controversies,” both because we expect that all original research should offer critical perspectives and to indicate that the JBI encourages examination and debate of topical or emerging issues or concerns.
- Expansion of the regular “Recent Developments” column beyond “Law” to include “Ethics” and “Health and Society.”
- Replacing “Critical Commentaries” with regular “Focus Articles and “Commentaries” to enable the JBI to support a more dynamic interaction between authors and readers.
- Continuation of other important sections, including “Book, Film, and Art Reviews” and Letters to the Editor (now called “Responses”).
- Ongoing opportunities for symposia and special issues—one of the many things that sets the JBI apart.

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Read more in the JBI's “Information about Articles and Collections” here. <https://link.springer.com/journal/11673/updates>

Table 1 JBI policy links

1. Editorial board: <https://link.springer.com/journal/11673/editors>
2. Aims and scope: <https://link.springer.com/journal/11673/aims-and-scope>
3. Updates: <https://link.springer.com/journal/11673/updates>
4. Submission guidelines: <https://link.springer.com/journal/11673/submission-guidelines>
5. Ethical Responsibilities of Authors: https://link.springer.com/journal/11673/submission-guidelines#Instructions%20for%20Authors_Ethical%20Responsibilities%20of%20Authors
6. Competing interests: https://link.springer.com/journal/11673/submission-guidelines#Instructions%20for%20Authors_Competing%20Interests
7. Research involving human participants: https://link.springer.com/journal/11673/submission-guidelines#Instructions%20for%20Authors_Research%20involving%20human%20participants,%20their%20data%20or%20biological%20material
8. Authorship principles: https://link.springer.com/journal/11673/submission-guidelines#Instructions%20for%20Authors_Authorship%20principles
9. Research data principles: https://link.springer.com/journal/11673/submission-guidelines#Instructions%20for%20Authors_Research%20Data%20Policy
10. Mistakes to avoid during preparation of manuscripts: <https://beta.springernature.com/pre-submission?journalId=11673>
11. Ethics and disclosures: <https://link.springer.com/journal/11673/ethics-and-disclosures>
12. Fees and funding: <https://link.springer.com/journal/11673/how-to-publish-with-us#Fees%20and%20Funding>
13. Australian Association of Bioethics and Health Law: <https://link.springer.com/journal/11673/updates/17226636>
14. Collections and calls for papers: <https://link.springer.com/journal/11673/collections?filter=Open>
15. Instructions to authors (https://link.springer.com/journal/11673/submission-guidelines#Instructions%20for%20Authors_Instructions%20for%20Authors)

New Resources to Support for Authors, Editors, and Reviewers

New and revised information for editors and for reviewers—complementing updated resources for authors—will soon be published on the JBI’s website. These provide clear guidance about roles, responsibilities, communication, and assistance with workflow. The resources include:

- Information for Authors
- Information about Articles and Collections
- Policy on Associate Editors
- Information for Editors
- Information for Guest Editors
- Information for Reviewers

These documents incorporate several other reforms recommended by the JBI working groups, including: inviting submitting authors to nominate at least two reviewers; and clarification of author responsibilities and required declarations in relation to authorship, competing interests, funding, and ethics approval.

Working with our publisher Springer we also have reached an agreement by which five authors—who

otherwise would not have free access to Open Access publishing under institutional arrangements—will be offered Open Access publication of their paper. To support this we have developed a process for selection of these manuscripts/authors that takes into consideration issues of equity, inclusion, quality, and novelty.

Renewal and Reconfiguration of the JBI Editorial Community

Consistent with changes to the content and organization of the JBI, we have clarified and simplified the organizational structure of the JBI. Details of the organizational structure are available here <https://link.springer.com/journal/11673/editors>. We have also recruited many new Associate Editors from across the globe and reconfigured the responsibilities of Associate Editors to match the new sections of the JBI. Consequently:

- There are now three types of Associate Editors: Discipline, Section, and Management and Production editors.

- The JBI now has a new Deputy Editor, Michael Chapman (ANU).
- Through a recent EOI process, several new and existing Associate Editor positions have been filled. We invite interested individuals to consider remaining vacancies or to contact us about other ways in which they might wish to join the work of the JBI community.

The above reflects some of the changes you will see happening over next few months. These and other initiatives will be formally launched later this year at celebrations of the twentieth anniversary of the foundation of the JBI. We look forward to sharing them with you.

Although much has been accomplished, there is still work to be done. We treasure the JBI community and the JBI's mission as a region of foment that is inclusive, diverse, and open to multiple disciplines, perspectives, and values. We envisage ongoing reflection on the way we work, focused on keeping the JBI relevant, increasing its scope and impact, and ensuring it is a valuable forum for different disciplines, audiences, and readers.

Moving to the current issue, in the regular legal Recent Developments column, Edward Dove (2024) of Edinburgh University reports on a recent U.K. Supreme Court decision that rejected the legal claim that where a death has occurred in which there is judged to be medical negligence liability, so-called "secondary" victims (usually family or friends) cannot claim damages for the distress they experience. Many professionals will no doubt be relieved that there is some limit to liability no matter how grievous the act or omission and also that increased indemnity will not add even more to health costs.

As times pass from the COVID-19 pandemic, more rational consideration is being given to some of the harsh restrictions that governments around the world resorted to in the anxious months in 2020–2022. Rheeder (2024) makes an ethical assessment of the 2020 stay at home order in South Africa. This very restrictive order confined people to their homes for just over a month. The author also questions the evidence for the order's effectiveness. QR codes were extensively used around the world during the pandemic, especially in China. Han, Xu, and Ma (2024) reflect on the ethics of using such digital tools in the elderly. Unfortunately, this reliance on

technology can disadvantage the elderly in times of social stress and have the potential to further marginalize the elderly at times of anxiety and isolation. The authors make a plea for more humane rules and technology deployment in health policy based on ethical principles.

In many parts of the world, assisted dying is now old news in the sense that many jurisdictions have legalized it in various forms, and the arguments for and against have been had, giving way to a monitoring and review phase. However, rear-guard actions about basic ethical principles persist. In Canada, the term used is Medical Aid in Dying (MAID), and controversy has persisted there perhaps a bit more than some other jurisdictions as there have been moves to expand the criteria, notably in the province of Quebec. Vogelstein (2024) argues against the not-so-new objection that assisted dying is contrary to the goals of medicine and hence the ethical obligations of the profession.

Davidson, Hammarberg, and Fisher (2024) draw attention to the added vulnerabilities that refugees and asylum seekers experience when being approached to participate in research studies. Whilst these can be helpful to improve refugee welfare, additional care is needed in research ethics processes because of their vulnerabilities, not the least of which would seem to be a fear of displeasing the "host" country government.

Doctors tend to use informal peer review and collegial consultation to resolve difficult issues. In fact, it is an important mechanism to ensure safe practice to be able to call on trusted colleagues for help and perhaps an area that warrants more study. The question is at what point is external scrutiny required and what role is there for specialist bioethical consultants (who tend to be thin on the ground outside North America). Portillo, et al. (2024) have conducted an empirical study of Spanish internal medicine specialists (also known as general physicians). These specialists are increasingly encountering ethical issues due to the ageing population, non-malignant diseases at end of life, frailty, dementia, and cognitive capacity. They found that just under 90 per cent of participants sought help when they felt they needed it, mostly from colleagues. Guidelines and protocols were valued as was greater access to bioethics consultation.

The relative weight accorded to empirical data in bioethics is an ongoing dialectic. Hopefully for most

people in the discipline and related fields take a non-polar view and accept that just as wave and particle theory can coexist in physics, so should empirical and non-empirical studies be able to have their role even if they come into conflict. Wangmo, Provoos, and Mihailov (2024) report a survey of ways to integrate the two, especially reflective equilibrium, and conclude that empirical methodology may be misunderstood in integration processes.

It seems understandable that organ recipients and their families may wish to know the identity of a donor. Such knowledge may often come from a need to express gratitude and impute meaning into the process. Cignarella, et al. (2024) has reviewed Australian guidelines using a policy analysis framework. Legislation protects donor identity and guidelines support this, but the authors think that more should be known about the views and feelings of donor families and recipient wishes, and health workers experiences too.

Making healthcare environments friendly to those with cognitive impairment is a big challenge at a time when dementia and delirium incidence are escalating everywhere. Brigden, et al. (2024) propose an ethical framework for assessing the use of visual identifiers to assist cognitively impaired people to orientate themselves in hospital.

Maung (2024) uses the Beauchamp and Childress's four principles approach to argue against those who would seek to limit access to gender affirming hormonal treatment for trans adolescents. The paper sets out to provide a systematic philosophical analysis to counter what the author believes to be often ideological opposition that is not backed up by a proper assessment of the possible harms weighed up against the potential benefits.

As scientific advances allow ever more sophisticated individual biological profiling, the increased capacity to detect crime and responsibility must be weighed against individual liberty and privacy concerns. Smith and Miller (2024) make a case for regulation of DNA sampling in forensic investigations using so-called massively parallel sequencing (MPS). They accept that there is a moral duty can be established for people to participate in such testing, based on collective responsibility, but strict regulation is required particularly concerning restriction of the test results to the purpose and scope of the investigation and destruction of results when the investigation is completed.

Modern dentistry offers enormous potential for good oral health, particularly regarding speech, nutrition, and appearance. Most of us probably see dental care in terms of technical episodes (filling, extraction, cleaning, root canal, wisdom teeth extraction etc). Kovács (2024) invites a holistic craniofacial view for more extensive treatment strategies and examines the ethical dimensions of making these treatment strategy choices with patients where more than one plan maybe de adopted according to personal preference, value of aesthetics, and resources available.

For those with a more theoretical interest in bioethics, Wallaert and Segers (2024) address what is termed “epistemic injustice” within the four principles framework, where individuals are given less credence than they deserve, in response to what Della Croce saw as a specification of non-maleficence (Della Croce 2023). They explore a notion of hermeneutic injustice whereby a person's experience is not understood and propose conclusions for both individuals and organizations that go beyond not harming to positive action in terms of respecting autonomy.

Finally, Lederman (2024) provides a spirited review of a recent book about the politics of organ transplantation. The book comes from an unusual bioethical angle in that the author, Hagai Boas, has had four kidney transplants over nearly forty years. The reviewer robustly critiques the bioethical arguments independently from the author's impressive personal experience.

Declarations

Competing interest The author(s) declare no competing interests.

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