

Dear WG3 members

A brief report on the ongoing activities:

1. Marcin and Goran have been working together and separately on extant and proposed guidelines for research in disaster/humanitarian settings (henceforth: disaster). Marcin focuses on pediatrics and Goran on the concept of vulnerability. Their initial report was presented in Malta and should serve as a solid basis for publications. This endeavor is led by Prof. Kakuk and is now at the stage of drafting an article.
2. Theresa Fuchs spent an stsm/internship in the WHO headquarters this September. The initial purpose was review and interview WHO's ERC (Ethics Committee). Her research should complement Marcin's and Goran's. In actuality, she was present there and privy to the hectic discussions regarding to the Ebola outbreak. It is a unique opportunity for a social anthropologist. The main obstacle towards publication is secrecy, as many research protocols are protected by copyrights and similar commitments of confidentiality. Theresa will spend the coming year with me for writing a thesis on homebirth. However, we will work towards processing her WHO experience and will later see how to deploy her research on childbirth towards the ethical issues related to childbirth in disaster.
3. Shlomit and Dusanka have presented their progress on the topic of "off label" use in disaster.
4. We just finished a two day workshop in Madrid. The initial purpose was "fusion" of field experience and theory. Sandro Colombo is a retired WHO public health doctor with experience in diverse settings, from Darfur to Haiti. Also came Dr. Concha Bonet, a pediatrician who has carried out many missions, mainly within the framework of "Doctors of the World". Concha holds a master degree in bioethics as well. Francisco Rey, another well experienced humanitarian had to cancel his attendance. From the theory side came Goran and Marcin, along with our host Emanuele. Margherita Brusa worked hard on the preparation of the workshop and brought her experience in pediatric bioethics and teaching bioethics in the Palestinian authority. I opened the workshop with a talk resending my developing work on the "crisis of humanitarianism and research as rationalization of care". On the theory side (and the jurist) was Shlomit. We are keen on pursuing the original plan with long space given to "narratives from the field" and their examination in the light of interdisciplinary team (e.g. international law, ethics, clinical medicine, philosophy).
5. A few presentations were of utmost value in the workshop, even though they did not fall within the initial planning. Virginia Murray, a public health consultant to the UK government and UN on risk reduction came and presented her ongoing work with the UN. Donal honored us with his presence and talk about ethical challenges in the coping with the Ebola outbreak.

6. Athula's student, Chesmal Siriwardhana presented his research proposal on post research audit of ethical problems in research. This is an ambitious grant application on a painful issue – lack of both oversight and of ongoing research. The literature on research ethics is almost purely about pre-approval stage by IRBs. Little we hear about botched research and legal suits by participants. But no system for retrospective audit exists.
7. Michael (me) has been working this year on a grant proposal for research ethics in MLIC (Middle and Low Income Countries). The partner to this application is Prof. Rodica Gramma from Moldova. Following Donal's encouragement to include Moldova (and other east European Countries) in our Action, I will suggest this to her and render the role of the Action more apparent in the proposal.
8. Naturally, all disciplinary divisions are a little arbitrary. I have found myself involved in Actions projects not related or indirectly connected to "research ethics in disaster". I was happy to review and write comments to Daniel Messelken and Caroline Clarnival's research proposal regarding informed consent over linguistic barriers, the developing proposal on coercion presented by Emanuele and Federica Demuru and Ernesto DeAloja's drafts for a chapter on palliative care in disaster. Another project was Aivitia Putnina's STSM with me (hosting a field work to the Palestinian Authority) in January 2014. Much efforts have been put in order to cooperate with the Caritas baby Hospital in Bethlehem. I thank Margherita for her role in this endeavor and for her leadership in the preparation of the Madrid workshop.

I am sure I have failed to mention all the work done and related to WG3. This is why I encourage you to tell me (us) about your work. WG members who do not find their name in this report are highly encouraged to communicate their work, intentions and points of interest. I have not been writing mails on my own initiatives, but all those who shared their proposals, drafts etc., have received detailed feedback from me, hopefully it was valuable to their research.

Those of you who have read this far deserve my apologies for failure to arrange in time the program for our Meetings in Porto, my confusion of Chesmal's research in the plenary and my absence from some of the discussions (exhaustion and urgent consultation I had to participate over the phone). I wish to thank Shlomit who helps me a lot in WG3'r related task. All misdemeanors are mine, not hers. I have seen my role as divided into (1) initiating some projects and activities and (2) Responding to, mainly in the form of revision of drafts, every proposal and idea you (and other Action members shared with me). This has been a lot of work and much satisfaction as well.

All the best

Michael Barilan