O my God!
I got it 9 years later. Can you believe that?
You plant a tree and you forget it. You
forget it for 9 years and suddenly you realize
that it is important to water it. How can you
justify this act of ignorance? Maybe you
cannot.

When I received a letter from the health
directorate of the Federally Administered
Tribal Areas (FATA) to participate in a two
day workshop for health professionals
arranged by the National Bioethics
Committee (NBC) of Pakistan, my mind was
not clear about how helpful it would be. But
after attending the workshop, I told Dr.
Moazam that I intend to write for the first
time, and that is on bioethics.

I graduated in 2009 as a doctor. At that
time I had no idea about this vital subject
which is known as bioethics. Although we
hear about the ethics which is fundamental in
life, we know but little about professional
ethics. Today, while thinking as a doctor,
bioethics is so fundamental for a health
professional, just as water for a tree.
Healthcare profession in the absence of
bioethics and moral obligations is just like a
tree without water which loses all its charm.
In the current era of scientific advancement,
the field of healthcare is no exception. With
much advancement in the field of medicine
and research the role of bioethics has
increased manifold. In developed nations,
bioethics is keeping pace by formulating new
laws and obligations, but where do we stand?

We are far behind in building a standard
foundation which is ethically and morally
acceptable for our community and health
professionals to stand on. So what can be
done? Who will do it? How can it be done? And
from where should we start?

Not going into much detail, being a new
student to the subject and lacking the required
expertise, I will highlight the core place where
bioethics has been ignored. That core place is
the medical curriculum at graduate level where
bioethics is not taught as a basic subject (at
least, as far as I know from the curriculum of
my province). Currently we are producing
doctors with very little knowledge regarding
bioethics. Although the NBC is currently
holding workshops for health professionals,
this is a very small number getting trained. In
my view, the best way is to develop a national
consensus and approach the Pakistan Medical
and Dental Council to include bioethics in the
curriculum of the graduation course in the
medical colleges/universities throughout the
country. The emphasis on the subject of
bioethics should not be less than on any other
subject in the curriculum of medical graduates.

There remains a lot to be done. But I am
thankful to the NBC for providing me the
opportunity to learn about the basics of
bioethics regarding medical practice and
research. I will be much pleased to continue to
develop my understanding of bioethics in the
future.

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