

OTAGO BIOETHICS REPORT

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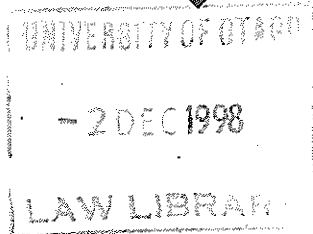
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Editorial

Cartwright Inquiry Anniversary

Lynley Anderson



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1998 is the tenth anniversary of the Cartwright Inquiry into matters surrounding the treatment of cervical cancer at National Women's Hospital. The report of the Inquiry by Judge Silvia Cartwright included recommendations whose implementation has changed the face of health and disability services throughout New Zealand. In this issue of the Otago Bioethics Report we are fortunate to have two papers relating to the Inquiry and the Report. The first contribution is by Sandra Coney, one of the authors of the original *Metro* article that first alerted the public to the occurrences at National Women's Hospital in Auckland. In this paper Sandra reflects on the extent of the adoption of Judge Cartwright's recommendations and her concerns for the future as health reforms make an impact.

Health and Disability Commissioner Robyn Stent is the author of the second paper, describing the process involved in the establishment of the Commissioner and the Commissioner's office. In her article Robyn also describes the activities of the Commissioner's office, the impact of the code on health professional groups, and her plans for future development of the Act and Code. Also in this issue, Professor Peter Skegg looks back to a code of medical ethics from New Zealand and finds some interesting differences and similarities to recent codes.

One of the recommendations made by Judge Cartwright in the Report was a requirement for ethics teaching to be provided to medical students. At the time of the Inquiry, the Bioethics Re-

search Centre at Otago University had already been established and Professor Alastair Campbell was in New Zealand for an interview for the position of Director of the Centre. He was called upon to be an expert witness at the Inquiry. Following his appointment as Director of the Centre, the teaching of ethics to medical students was commenced (Alastair also has an article in this issue, on the role of virtue in health care). Ten years later, ethics is now fully integrated into the new medical curriculum, with the Centre currently being heavily involved in further development occurring in the clinical years of the student's training.

The legacy of the Cartwright Inquiry and Report and the subsequent Health and Disability legislation has created an environment which has facilitated the introduction of ethics teaching into health professional training programmes. Now we have teaching sessions that include material on patient narratives, demonstrating how illness impacts upon peoples lives and the decisions that they face. Education of students on the Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights has moved beyond simply looking at how to avoid patient complaints and possible censure, to how health care professionals can offer better care in line with the needs of patients. Ethical review of research was also an important issue highlighted in the Cartwright Report and this is reflected in the teaching that is done by this Centre in many health professional programmes here at Otago. Students are taught the requirements involved



when dealing with research involving humans, the need for informed consent of participants and the need for ongoing effective ethical review of research. The Centre has recently been made responsible, by the New Zealand Health Research Council, for the provision of training for members of

Ethics Review Committees throughout New Zealand.

The Cartwright Inquiry and Report has had an impact upon all sectors of health care and health education in New Zealand and will do so for many years to come. This is an ideal time to acknowledge the work done by those

people who first brought the issue to our attention, and to those who continue to work to improve services for all people accessing health care or participating in research within New Zealand.

At the Centre

This volume of the Otago Bioethics Report signals some major changes at the Bioethics Research Centre. The first change has been at the Editor's desk. It is with great sadness that we say goodbye to Dr John McMillan who has been the editor of the OBR for four years. John has taken a position at Oxford University and we wish him the very best in his new job, and congratulations on his recent marriage to Julie.

The next major change is the forthcoming departure of Dr Barbara Nicholas, who has been a staff member at the Bioethics Research Centre for seven years. Barbara has taken a position with the Clearing House for Health Outcomes and Health Technology Assessment, which is part of the Christchurch School of Medicine. Barbara's contribution to the department has been considerable over the years and she will be sorely missed.

Conference attendances

The Australian Bioethics Association conference was in Hobart this year, and there was a sizeable New Zealand contingent attending. Professor Grant Gillett and Lynley Anderson both presented two papers each at the conference. Sandy Elkin and Mary Rillstone, two students from the Centre, also attended this conference and gave papers. Professor Alastair Campbell was there as one of the keynote speakers – despite now living in the UK he was happy to be counted as an honorary kiwi. Grant Gillett was subsequently elected to the committee of the Australian Bioethics Association.

Other conference involvement from staff recently has been Professor Grant Gillett attending an Australasian As-

sociation of Philosophy Conference – in Hamilton this year. In October he will attend the New Zealand Consensus conference on preterm infants.

Professor Donald Evans presented the Sir Arnold Nordmeyer memorial lecture at the Wellington School of Medicine in October on the topic 'Medicine as a Form of Social Control'. He has also addressed the Environmental Risk Management Authority on 'Ethical Review of Risk Management', the Health Funding Authority on 'Ethics and the Waiting List Initiative', the National Conference of District Nurses in New Zealand on 'Ethics and Good Clinical Practice', and the combined meeting of the Australian and New Zealand Societies of Anaesthetists on 'Ethics and Anaesthetics'. He presented two keynote papers at a University of Sydney Medical Ethics conference on 'The Fractured Inheritance of Philosophical Ethics' and 'Equity and Measuring Health Benefits'.

Barbara Nicholas gave a workshop at a conference in Sydney called 'Winds of Change, Women and the culture of universities' in July.

Barbara also attended the 8th Symposium of International Association of Women Philosophers in Boston in August, where she gave a paper.

Visiting guests

Professor Alastair Campbell visited the Centre in September prior to attending the conference in Hobart. While he was here he caught up with old friends and gave a public lecture at the medical school entitled 'Virtuous doctor or virtuous patient?', which appears in this issue.

From the Director

Farewell to John McMillan

It gives me great pleasure on behalf of all the staff at the Bioethics Research Centre to offer our warmest congratulations to the Editor of the *Otago Bioethics Report* – John McMillan – on his recent appointment as the Hastings Center Junior Research Fellow in Medical Ethics at University College Oxford. John took up his post on 1 October 1998.

Since 1994 John has served as a Junior Research Fellow and, more recently, as an Assistant Lecturer in the Centre. He has played an important role in the teaching programme of the Centre and in the development of the curriculum. He is a graduate in Philosophy at the University of Otago and has recently completed his PhD studies at the Centre. His departure will be a great loss to the Centre but we are very proud that his development in the subject whilst a member of the Centre has resulted in this honour.

The Fellowship will offer him a wonderful opportunity to concentrate on research in Medical Ethics for three years. The post will involve John's collaboration with ETHOX (the Oxford Institute for Ethics and Communication in Health Care Practice) and departments in the Medical School. He will also be responsible for the organisation of an annual conference on Medical Ethics funded by the Hastings Center of New York.

We hope that he will leave something of his heart in Otago and that we shall be able to work with him again sometime in the future.