

## Editorial

### The clash of civilizations and the remaking the order of research ethics: Revision of the Declaration of Helsinki in pursuit of global justice

The Declaration of Helsinki (DoH) by the World Medical Association (WMA) was revised in October 2024. This special issue of our journal celebrates the 60th anniversary from its first adoption in 1964.

In the report of the WMA General Assembly held in Helsinki, Finland, where this tenth revision was adopted, the views of experts at the center of the revision process present the global value of the DoH and the significance of the revision. On the same day as the adoption, *the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)* published a number of opinions from experts (a list of references is included in this report). However, the articles of the *JAMA* did not adequately convey the background of the motion (demurral) officially expressed by the Uruguayan Medical Association during the General Assembly. The essence of research ethics is encapsulated in the counterargument from such minorities. This motion represented an alternative worldview, at the final moment of the revision process of the most respected international research ethics principle in the world. This fact is extremely significant.

The following articles in this journal show emerging discussions among stakeholders attempting to convey such alternative views in order to deepen the debates on the revision of the DoH. It includes the proceedings of webinars, interviews, papers. The webinar was co-organized by the Brazilian Society of Bioethics, the International Federation of Associations of Pharmaceutical Physicians and Pharmaceutical Medicine (IFAPP), and our journal, *Clinical Evaluation*, being supported by the Japan Association for Bioethics.

Amongst all, the Patient and Public Declaration of Research Ethics by the Bioethics Working Group of the Japanese Institute for Public Engagement (Ji4pe), of which majority of authors are patients and the public; and the Helsinki Statement (translated from English to Arabic, Japanese and Greek), of which majority of authors are from Global South and Asian countries are particularly noteworthy. Their intention is to improve the fair practice of research and research review, through maximizing the impact of the new DoH along with the clarification and expression of alternative views.

These initiatives have made it clear that the patients and public are not just people who should be respected and listened to, but should also be “equal participants” in policy making and decision-making in practice as “qualified stakeholders”. Furthermore, these initiatives have given rise to the “participation of medical students” in research ethics debates, who demand clinical trial transparency and global access to essential medicines.

Based on these ideas, the author plans to propose an international legal instrument for the protection of research participants as an international version of the Draft Human Research Participants Protection Bill that the author published in Japanese through this journal in 2002. However, the title should not imply a simple traditional idea of “protection,” rather, should include an idea of “co-creation” among stakeholders not limited to research participants and researchers.

This issue of the journal is the cornerstone and starting point of this endeavor offering a glimpse into the exciting negotiations combined with wits. Initiative for remaking the order of research ethics based on global ethics is a challenge for the next revision of the Declaration of Helsinki.

#### Reference

Huntington SP. The clash of civilizations and the remaking of world order. Touchstone; 1997.

Chieko Kurihara  
Editor-in-Chief, *Clinical Evaluation*