

Salim El-Hoss Bioethics and Professionalism Program holds its 6th regional conference in Kuwait



According to the ethics of research related to healthcare in developing countries' report published by the Nuffield Council on Bioethics, there is an urgent need for externally sponsored research in developing countries. Nonetheless rigorous ethical safeguards must be put in place to prevent the exploitation of those who take part in research."

In order to address this issue, particularly in the Arab region, the Salim El-Hoss Bioethics and Professionalism Program (SHBPP) at the American University of Beirut Faculty of Medicine, in collaboration with The Dasman Diabetes Institute and the Nuffield Council on Bioethics, with the support of the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, and in joint sponsorship with Cleveland Clinic, organized its 6th regional conference under the title "Research in Developing Countries" on May 25-26, 2014 in the Arab Organizations Headquarters Building in Kuwait.

The conference brought together physicians, researchers, scientists and various professionals concerned with the ethical review of research as well as policy makers and funders from several countries of the Arab region. It aimed to explore ways in which ethical research can be promoted in developing countries, to determine research priorities and to provide essential elements for developing a sound ethical framework for healthcare research.

In his opening speech Mr. Abdulatif Al-Hamad, Director General of The Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development welcomed the participants and speakers and commended the efforts of this conference. This was followed by H.E. Dr. Salim El-Hoss, Former Prime Minister of Lebanon, word in which he highlighted the importance of ethical research that ensures "a healthy confluence between fine professional practice and responsible social awareness". Dr. Kazem Behbehani, Director General of the Dasman Diabetes Institute, gave a brief word thanking the SHBPP for the conference and hoping for future opportunities for collaboration on issues related to research.

In a brief introduction, Dr. Thalia Arawi, Founding Director of the SHBPP, expressed hope to see research ethics develop from within the Arab circles "just as science, medicine and art have started with the Arabs", and that this conference as well as the launching of the Arab Bioethics Society and the Arab Research Ethics Network helps achieve this aim. She also highlighted some crucial principles of research: voluntary participation, informed consent, privacy, autonomy, justice, safeguarding the confidentiality of data, and producing good quality research. These concepts were then elaborated in the series of presentations given by guest speakers from different countries such as the United Kingdom, Lebanon, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Syria, and Egypt.

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