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Ethical Hot Potatoes: New Perspectives

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Ethical Hot Potatoes: New Perspectives

FORWARD

2018

For the past 30 years demographers and researchers have been the harbingers of the growing global obesity epidemic in the largely industrialized nations. What has been the effect of these warnings? At the close of 2018, nearly one-third of the world is either obese or overweight. Can we afford to carry this load economically? In some countries, the cost of obesity is the largest gross national expense. The question is not who to blame; rather, what are the steps to deter this phenomena due largely to higher energy intake? Attorney - CPA Joanie Sompayrac and CPA Katharine Trundle of the University of Tennessee – Chattanooga, USA propose a strategy that somewhat aligns itself with what was wagered against tobacco companies. They purport to impose an obesity or BMI tax for those classified as obese. Is this ethical? How will this tax effect children and who is to blame for childhood obesity? Given that the BMI does not differentiate between fat and muscle, should other sources of measurement be taken into consideration? In as much as all of us pay for the burden of obesity, you owe it to yourself to join this ethical debate. Thanks Joanie and Katharine for this thought provoking narrative.

The old adage, *I'll walk a mile for a _____* may be about to take a new turn. With the advent of nicotine vaccines, individuals may be able to curb their addiction with a simple injection. Can it be that easy? Drs. Alsrayheen and Aldiabat of the University of New Brunswick proclaim that nicotine vaccines are a new preventive and treatment method for smoking addiction. Further, the testing has now completed phase three with evidence that the side effects are mild. So, what is the debate? Not only are adults suggested as recipients, but also some want to give them to children as prophylactic agents. One problem with this suggestion is that no studies could be found demonstrating the effect of the vaccines on those who have never smoked tobacco. Does the good outweigh the bad? Authors perceive the vaccine as a “healthy and ethical choice to prevent and treat smoking.” What does the ethical community think? Provided are arguments from both the Utilitarian and Deontological perspectives in regarding the vaccines. Thanks, authors, for opening this ethical debate for readers.

Kelsey Hayes, a healthcare professional of the College of Our Lady of the Elms, explores ethical implications for treatment of gender dysphoria in youth. A plethora of research is presented which strongly suggests that the current use of *inconclusive* and *under-researched* methods to manage gender dysphoria cannot be ethically justified; hence, we are encumbered to re-evaluate current treatment options. Kelsey, thanks for your contribution to this evolving ethical debate.

Last, ethics scholar, Dr. Peter DePergola II, of the University of Massachusetts Medical School, College of Our Lady of the Elms, presents a masterful work on euthanasia, assisted suicide, and palliative sedation as a brief clarification and reinforcement of the Moral Logic. He posits the argument that while palliative

sedation fulfills the requirements of morally licit medical practice – and so successfully executes the tenants of sound ethical logic- both euthanasia and assisted suicide do not. An interesting perspective. Read it and see if you agree or disagree.

You are welcome to comment on our Facebook page and like us: *The Online Journal of Health Ethics*. Thanks to **all** our readers, authors, management (Josh Cromwell) and the generous support from the OJHE's home: The University of Southern Mississippi. May you have a prosperous and healthy holiday season and New Year. I am certain that the newest ethical debate awaits us.

Best,

Sheila P. Davis, PhD, Editor



