

Neuroethics - a new approach in neurological services

F.Gerstenbrand, H.Baumgartner, Vienna, Innsbruck

The aim of the currently evolving European Bioethics Convention of the Council of Europe is the protection of human rights and dignity of human beings with regard to the application of biology and medicine. Accordingly, developments in medicine and biology should be used exclusively for the benefit of present and future generations. For the individual this means protection against any threat resulting from the improper use of scientific development. At the level of society, collective interests, such as public safety and public health, have to be protected. However, following the principle of the primacy of the human being, priority is given to the individual in the event of a conflict. And finally, safeguards are necessary to protect the human species as such due to the advances in molecular biology and genetics.

Progress has made ethical considerations increasingly important both for the practice of medicine and for biomedical research, with patient autonomy and informed consent being fundamental tenets. Observing the principles of bioethics while medically interfering with a brain that is incapacitated is perhaps the most critical challenge for the neurologist. Neuroethics - the application of the principles of bioethics in neurology - will have to focus on several specific topics, such as brain death, somatic gene therapy, transplantation, withdrawing and withholding decisions, treatment of advanced progressive neurological disease. While research ethics committees may assist those dealing with experimental work, little support is available for dealing with ethical issues in clinical practice. We believe that the teaching of neuroethics at all levels of medical education and training will be the only way to address the increasingly complex ethical challenges of the future. The neurological community is called upon to take steps necessary to initiate such programmes.



European Federation of Neurological Societies (EFNS)

EFNS Teaching Course

Romania, Targu Mures

May 28–30, 2000

EFNS Teaching Course Targu Mures, Romania, May 28-30, 2000



Course Participants

Main organizers

Prof. Ioan Pascu
Str. Gh. Marinescu 50
RO-4300 Targu Mures
Romania

Prof. Laszlo Csiba
Department of Neurology
Nagyerdei krt. 98
H-4012 Debrecen
Hungary