

Greetings

The Future of the Center for Biomedical Ethics and Law (CBEL) Report. Some reflections upon retirement.

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Greetings to our readers. It has been approximately five years since the first issue of the *Center for Biomedical Ethics and Law (CBEL) Report* was published. I will retire from my position as Professor at the University of Tokyo on March 31, 2023. Thank you all for your support over the years.

Some history

Over the past five years, the *CBEL Report* has made great strides. We have successfully published five volumes which are now indexed in *Ichushi*, J-Stage, J-GLOBAL, Medical Online, and Google Scholar, and we have applied for the *CBEL Report* to be indexed in PubMed.

The number of submissions has also increased significantly, and we are receiving more submissions from leading Japanese bioethics professors, young researchers, and scholars from abroad. We are now considering publishing papers not only in Japanese and English, but also in other languages, as long as they are translated into both English and Japanese.

The *CBEL Report* includes an *Invited Article* category, which enables students to publish their work. In particular, students at the University of Tokyo Medical School who undertake a research elective are able to submit their research essays to the *CBEL Report* as part of their

assessment. Similarly, students who complete a thesis in the Department of Health Sciences, and students who are assigned a research project in the Graduate School of Public Health also have the opportunity to submit.

The *CBEL Report* is the result of my experience of publication in academic journals. Taking advantage of the features of electronic journals, we are able to submit, review, and publish articles in a timely fashion. As it is not a commercial journal, we do not charge publication fees. Nevertheless, the original articles are peer-reviewed by our distinguished Editorial Boards, thus ensuring high quality publications.

The Present

On April 1, 2019, the University of Tokyo Bioethics Collaborative Research Organization (BICRO (<https://bicro.u-tokyo.ac.jp/>)), was created with participation from many faculties of the University of Tokyo. The *CBEL Report* remains a core part of this organization and will also become the official publication of BICRO in April 2023. Moreover, Asia's largest bioethics reference center will become part of BICRO. At this time, Eisuke Nakazawa, the current deputy director of BICRO, will take over as the director. Eisuke Nakazawa will become the Editor-in-Chief of the *CBEL Report*. Makoto Udagawa will remain as Associate Editor. I will

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remain as Founding Editor.

At *CBEL and BICRO* we encourage interdisciplinary research. I focus here on two recent outstanding and innovative examples

(1) Research on Japanese altruism and vaccination

In collaboration with Drs. Komada, Lee and Watanabe, at Tokyo University of Health Sciences, we published a research paper on altruism amongst the Japanese and the issue of vaccination, on December 13, 2022 (*Vaccine X*: Elsevier, Note). This paper is an exploratory epidemiological study using secondary data from a health survey with statistical analysis. The Editorial, below, describes how these methods connect with ethics, and shows how the *CBEL Report* examines the ethics inherent in epidemiological studies of this kind.

The reviewers and editors evaluated and accepted this paper. In addition, it became the subject of commentary in the mainstream press, (Mainichi Shimbun, January 16, 2023, evening edition and on its English language website.

<https://mainichi.jp/english/articles/20230124/p2a/00m/0sc/017000c>

(2) *The World Caught a Cold*

Our second example concerns a picture book written by Dr. Shizuko Takahashi, a part-time lecturer who wrote her dissertation in our department and teaches “Global Bioethics” at the University of Tokyo. She is a mother of three, a wife, a childcare provider, an obstetrician/gynecologist, a researcher, and an activist. *The World Caught a Cold* in part results from Dr. Takahashi’s firsthand experience of the difficulty parents have in explaining coronavirus to their children. On

this basis, she decided to write a picture book that would make it easier for them to understand. *CBEL Report* readers should listen to the 7-minute reading by TBS announcer Ai Eto. (<https://www.screens-lab.jp/article/25850#http://www.yomo-ehon.com>, English subtitles are uploaded to the *CBEL Report* website <https://youtu.be/4Y3R09AEkBE>.)

This book has been translated into 14 languages in addition to the Japanese original, with the cooperation of Yale University. This means **44.3%** of the world’s population can access this resource.

It is poignant that this work was translated into both Ukrainian and Russian. Parents in both countries can read this book for free if they have access to the Internet, exemplifying the commonality shared by all families, even during war time.

Finally, I would like to report on our other publications. My colleagues and I have published *Introduction to Medical Ethics I* (Keiso Shobo, 2005, revised edition 2017), *Introduction to Medical Ethics II* (Keiso Shobo, 2007), and *Introduction to Medical Ethics III: Public Health Ethics*. (Keiso Shobo, 2015), which have been very well received. Furthermore, we have published *Introduction to Ethics* (Keiso Shobo, 2018), a book comprising the theoretical chapters of the introductory series, hoping that readers would be able to access the basics of ethics from a wide range of diverse disciplines. *The Casebook of Medical Ethics* (Igaku Shoin, 2002) is in its 27th printing. And as for translated books, Johnsen et al.’s *Clinical Ethics* (Shinko Igaku, 1997, 3rd edition, 2006, 5th edition) has been published. The 9th edition translation (McGraw-Hill LANGE, 2021) will be published by the end of this year. I have also published a monograph in English, *Bioethics Across the Globe:*

Rebirthing Bioethics (Springer Nature, 2020). This work is available through open access, and was downloaded 20,000 times in 2021 in Africa, South America and West Asia.

I am writing a 2nd version now. Maybe within a year..... Stay tuned, there is more to come!!

I wish you all the best.

March 31, 2023

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Note

Komada TM, Lee JS, Watanabe E, Nakazawa E, Mori K, Akabayashi A. Factors of influenza vaccine inoculation and non-inoculation behavior of community- Factors of influenza vaccine inoculation and non-inoculation behavior of community- dwelling residents in Japan: Suggestions for vaccine policy and public health ethics after COVID-19. *Vaccine: X* 13: 2023 (<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvacx.2022.100245>)