



6th International Conference on Clinical Ethics Consultation

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Abstract Submission Form – Papers

Please contact John Tuohey at ethics@providence.org with any questions.

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Proposed title of paper: Hermeneutical approaches to clinical ethics consultancy: some personal experiences

Abstract with 3 clearly stated objectives in 250 words:

Our hospital is one of the biggest Swiss University hospitals ("Inselspital") at Bern, the capital of Switzerland. However, the idea of implementing structures of clinical ethics is a quite recent and new development in our hospital. In our talk, we will focus on the following objectives.

First, we will reflect upon our own attempts of introducing structures of clinical ethical activities in our hospital, outlining some of the hurdles and chances we have been facing. We draw on our own experiences as head of the ethics consultancy service and president of the ethics commission of the executive board of the hospital.

Second, we question the predominant strand of principle-based approaches to clinical ethics consultation, generally focusing on top-down decision-making in problematic situations. We in contrast introduce some basic assumptions of philosophical hermeneutics. This methodological framework of interpretative phenomenological analysis draws on the experiences of the professionals and offers bottom-up approaches to reflect upon clinical day-to-day action. We draw on our own research project in this field: "Improving methodologies of clinical ethics consultancy in Switzerland", funded by the Swiss Academy of Medical Sciences (2009-2010).

Third, we briefly outline our own epistemological assumptions of ethics in an institutionalized setting. In our own work we are governed by the Aristotelian idea of 'phronesis' (practical wisdom, prudence). We

will depict our understanding of 'phronesis' as a consolidating vision of bridging clinical practise, humanities, art and natural science.

If you have or will publish on this topic, please cite reference:

1) Kjetil Rommetveit, Jackie Leach Scully and ROUVEN PORZ: "The role of moral imagination in patients decision making." Submitted to: The Journal of Medicine and Philosophy (submitted June 2009).

2) Marcos Schwab and ROUVEN PORZ: "Some personal experiences as clinical ethics consultants in Switzerland": Submitted to Bioethica Forum (Switzerland, submitted August 2009).

3) KURT LAEDERACH, ROUVEN PORZ et al. : " Investigating moral understandings". To be submitted to the Journal of Medical Ethics (autumn 2009).

Are you planning to or will you be willing to submit a poster along with your paper?

Yes No